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30 Days to
BETTER BASS PLAYING
"A STRATEGY GUIDE FOR GETTING UN-STUCK"

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30 DAYS TO BETTER BASS PLAYING

*"A Strategy Guide for Getting Unstuck!"
And getting far better results a heck of a lot faster!*

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Foreword

WARNING: This Guide is Not Meant to Be Flash Read.

It's heavy on the pages because **it's heavy on the BIG ideas...** You see... Despite the fact that many people learn 1,001 things about the mechanics of 'playing bass' you'll find that as a rule of thumb, there are countless things that only hit home after having had them stare you in the face for 5—10 years... And strangely enough it's at this point that everything just seems to fall into place!

Some might argue that this is when you have practiced enough to significantly built your skill sets... E.g. The playing of scales and arpeggios, proper muting techniques etc... *(Which we all have to spend time doing... There's no way around that really.)* **But there's more to it than the muscle-memory attached to any dozen skill sets.**

No matter what you're doing *(learning to play the bass or trying to achieve success in some other area of your life)* it seems that **over and above** the 'building of skill sets' there is also a 'gestation' period that you 'can't escape' - *Almost like a universal law that says 'you have some dues to pay'... :-)*

Once you get past this point however, things that baffle other folks just start to seem 'obvious' to you and almost everything then 'comes easy'...

Ask world class sportsmen or people who built multi-billion dollar businesses. Many times they can't easily put their finger on what exactly changed, but when they got past that 'breaking point', even **the exact same things they were doing before simply get better results.**

Well that's the purpose of this guide... To help significantly shorten that 'gestation' period by making sure the right things 'hit home' to you **now** and not 10 years later.

I am not saying you will become a bass ninja in 30 days... I am saying however that when you're putting effort into the right things, with the right understanding, the improvement you can see in as little as 30 days is what many people can take years of 'back and forth' to grasp.

...I'm saying there are things that are going to occur to you down the road that will ignite your progress and will give you better results off of the same hour of practice time, and I've spent hundreds and hundreds of man hours investigating these things both from my own experience and through the experience of bassist 10 time better than myself.

What's inside these pages are those 'discoveries'...

“The Funkiest Dude Ever Blows A Gasket!”

My wife’s got a kid nephew whose favorite T-shirt boldly proclaims;

“Probably the
Funkiest
Dude Ever!...”

The kid’s just over 4 years old and he loves hanging out with me like a hungry bear loves picnic baskets...

I’m mutually nuts about him.

Whenever he’s visiting with us and I’m practicing, whatever’s on the TV is instantly as boring as an after-lunch calculus class...

He’d leave whatever he’s up to, come stand inches away from me, intently transfixed on my bass, carefully examining headstock to bridge for about a good 3 minutes - Then out of nowhere he’d routinely break into a hilarious mimicking of my own movements (I’m told he does it pretty accurately ☺) on his own fretless, string-less, ‘passive’ Air Bass.

So YES!

...He probably is the funkiest dude ever...

But there’s another thing about the kid that accents his never-ending ‘charm’. The little dude LOVES to play rough! -- In fact he actually kinda weards me out sometimes to tell the truth.

It’s almost like a switch would flip in his head and he’d go from being the calmest most well-behaved “Boy’s-choir-poster-child” to “The Incredible Hulk’s Mini-Me” in 5 seconds flat. I’m serious!

He’d be sitting calmly watching TV or playing a video game, and just like that, he’d snap and decided that he’s gonna punch you till your knees bleed.

But there's just one problem he faces when he tries any of them nonsensical shenanigans with me...

Unfortunately for him he's just over 3 feet tall with a 14 inch arm reach... I'm just shy of 6 feet tall with about a 30 inch reach.

So whenever I see that crazy glossed-over look in his eyes and I know he's preparing to throw one of his crazy little Fight-Club tantrums, I do what any 5' 11, 160 lb dude would do to a 3 foot, 50 lb dude...

I palm his head and keep him at a safe distance.

And boy do we cause quite a racket!

...Him, giving it everything he's got to land a blow... I, laughing my rear end off at his futile, now pathetic attempts.

Oh how I laugh, yes I do...

The little game would go on for about a good 7 minutes before the miniature titan would realize that try as he might his arms just ain't got no more juice, and as soon as he recognizes that he's hosed, I'm safe for another 10 minutes or so.

Side Note: Do you know how to recognize someone with Adult Attention Deficit Disorder (A.D.D.)?... *(Forget that, who do you think would win in a fight?... A Black Bear, or a Grizzly Bear?)*

Oh yeah back to the point...

Now maybe you don't know what it's like to challenge someone to a boxing match who has twice your arm reach, but have you ever stubbed your toe on a door or a table and felt like kicking the living saw dust outta the darn thing?

...Or perhaps you own a Personal Computer with a certain operating system that rhymes with 'Flindows' that has an uncanny knack for crashing right in the middle some very important work, just seconds before you saved it?

...And as God is your witness you felt like going outside, finding a hammer and beating the machine into a buzzing pulp? *(Yeah live it up Mac users... Live it up ...)*

Well the point is this...

Whatever the case, chances are you know what it feels like to be **FRUSTRATED outta your mind.**

...To feel stuck...

...To feel like you're revving your engines at full blast trying to accomplish something and you're NOT GETTING ANYWHERE.

...To work like a 'Caffeine-overdosed-Mongolian-Monkey' at something, anything, only to feel like you've taken one step forward and two steps back, and you're inches away from blowing a gasket and giving up.

I'm telling you this story because I deal with a lot of bass players.

A LOT...

And from my own experience and interaction with other bass players, I know what a practicing bass player feels like when you see practice session after session, week after week, month after month go by without producing much 'visible' fruit, while so many other folks just seem to jump from the back of the line and just 'get it'.

To feel that even though you learnt your scales, bought a decent bass, watched the training DVDs, took the lessons – **You're still trapped for fresh new, interesting ideas that some other guys always seem to have an abundance of...**

I know what it's like to talk to myself and say things like;

- 1) "That dude's a beast... I sure wish I could play even half as good as that..." or
- 2) "Every other bassist I meet seems to be improving yet I have been feeling stuck in a rut for the past 'forever'..." or
- 3) "Why can't I understand *(The fretboard, modes, scales, how to solo, play better grooves etc. etc. etc.)* the way X does? It just doesn't seem to stick for me..."

I'd wager that most every one of us reading this report can surely relate that at some point or the other you felt (or currently feel) **totally bummed-out with your bass playing, and that feeling sucks big time.** *(The way it sucks to box with an opponent who has 'laughingly' got you held at a safe distance.)*

So that's what we want to talk about today...

Bass players ask me all the time...

"Alex what do you do when you feel stuck?" — This report is going to answer that question in good detail and then some. And if you feel like you're flying high now, trust me, this advice is going to come in handy sooner than later.

“The Game Plan”

Ok let me outline how we’re gonna proceed through this report— First we’re gonna start off by taking a look at some of what I call ‘invisible barriers’ that pop-up to hinder our progress as bass players almost anytime we try to move past a certain level.

These hurdles aren’t that obvious if all you want to do is learn to play a single root note here and there, but the instant you think about moving past ‘bare rookie’ stage and you really want to start polishing you playing to a nice shine you’re likely to get monkey-slapped by one of these.

Most times when I point this out to beginners and intermediate players you should see the look on their faces—It’s literally like they are getting a great revelation but at the same time they are spooked because it seems like I’m almost reading their minds.

But the best thing that comes outta this is that they quickly realize that some of the reasons you’re *stuck* and your improvement feels stunted aren’t *all* on you... Especially if you’re a practicing **self taught** player.

So I want you to get something straight right from the start... *(This is important)*

You’re not necessarily a potentially worse player than ‘the other guy’.

I’ll expand on this a bit later because I know it’s sometimes hard to believe, but for now just *trust me on this one long enough for me to prove it to you later.*

“...it’s because most people don’t even know these invisible barriers exist, that they continue to beat up on themselves rather than CURE the problems.”

Fact is, there are several ‘more likely’ reasons that are causing you to feel like your playing is forever in the ditch, that have nothing to do with you being **The World’s Bummiest Bassist.**

...And because most people don’t even know these invisible barriers exist, they focus their limited practice time in the wrong way and end up beating up on themselves rather than CURING the root of their problem.

So first we’ll look at these obstacles and we’ll see how it is possible to become a highly competent player even if you don’t attend some big fancy music school, your daddy wasn’t Stanley Clarke and you didn’t live next/get mentored by Anthony Jackson.

Next we'll take a bird's eye view at some of the crucial 'bigger-picture' concepts you need to focus on if either of the following statement describe your current situation;

1) You're just getting started and you want to make sure you're getting off on the right foot, so that your progress is as un-hindered and progressive as possible or...

2) You've been playing a while and desperately want to jump-start your playing from out of the rut you feel stuck in. Your playing feels like it has 'plateaued' for a long time and you're looking for an injection that will get the wheels turning again...

Now let's be clear...

We're not talking about learning a few magic licks or something... A lot of folks learn 'magic' licks they thought were going to 'revolutionize' their playing and still don't feel or sound any better after the fact.

Here, I want you to see how top players *think and approach* their playing when *they* feel stuck and the things that give them the juice to keep sounding better.

Then finally, we'll zoom in from looking at the overall landscape of things and start sharing some very specific ideas, exercises and even some suggested practice schedules that I've found particularly helpful for getting you moving in the right direction ***fast***.

So be warned — This isn't your typical flimsy 2 page bass article.

I'll talk plainly about stuff here you won't commonly find people 'fessing-up' to.

I'll expose why some people try really hard and do put in honest effort but continue to 'suck', and then I'll tell you exactly what to do about it.

I'll share a lesson I learnt from an unexpected source that's arguably one of the single most powerful things to have impacted my playing — perhaps ever...

Some folks won't be able to read through this all.
(*But then again some folks eat nothing but cotton candy and they can't do a single pull-up...*)

Point is — This book ain't for everybody.

If what you're looking for is a 'cotton-candy bass diet' you might as well stop reading here.

...If you're looking for the next magic lick that will give you a Sony recording contract let me save you some time...

"...it truly is amazing how much we can accomplish and how quickly we can do so when we're climbing the right ladder..."

Go to Google and search for “magic bass lick that will land me a recording deal” (*Be sure to include the quotes*) - You’ll find a lot of results...

What you’re reading right now is far, far more than a little ‘put-your-finger-here-and-play-this-note’ pocket guide...

After I got it done and was editing it I realized this is exactly the kind of real world direction most practicing players want (that is a results of my interaction with more bassists that I can count) to get the clarity needed to move forward **NO MATTER WHAT STAGE YOU ARE AT** and I promise you, if you read through the entire thing and ‘get’ the core of what it says, you will see your playing SOAR -- No two ways about it, no more excuses.

So YES!

Very GREEN beginners are welcome...

In fact I personally think the contents of this report should be a required read for any new bassist just starting off... Surely for any bassist joining our little community here at Bass Guitar Tips — It’ll very likely save you years of chasing after the wrong things and getting nowhere.

And if you’ve got some years experience under your belt but aren’t quite satisfied with the results you’ve seen for the time you’ve been playing let me assure you this...

There is still a lot of time left for you to become a very competent and highly admired bass player because it truly is amazing how much we can accomplish and how quickly we can do so when we’re climbing the right ladder...

So pay attention.

I strongly suggest that you print this out, go to a quiet room for about 20 minutes and read it right away.

...

At again given point in time, only one of us is allowed to have A.D.D. here. So if you get the hint that I’m losing it, just slap the side of your monitor and shout,

“Hey dude, stayed focused!”

...and if you’re the one who’s losing focus, then it’s only fair you slap yourself and yell the same ok? ☺

Let’s get started.

“Five Big Reasons Most Bass Players Continue to Struggle...”

Q: Why did the bass player miss his second lesson...?

A: Because he was too busy playing gigs!

Is it just me or do some musicians seem to think that when it comes down to it, bass players would certainly be among those nominated for the “Musicians with the Smallest Talent Requirement” award...

...Right up there alongside kazoo-ists, (and of course drummers...) [Insert Sarcasm]

I’m ALWAYS hearing people say things like;

“Oh *anybody* can play the bass”, an innocent enough statement yes?

...Except when paired with the condescending body language that usually accompanies that statement, it literally translates to;

**“...Dude it’s just a guitar with fewer strings...

...how hard can it be?...”**

“... Dude, it’s just a guitar with fewer strings created for the simpler minded folks, who can’t quite make it on the piano or ‘the real’ guitar, so how hard can it be?...”

Now maybe it’s my undocumented psychological paranoia, but I’ve been in the company of singers, guitarists, pianists etc. who didn’t at the time know I’m a bassist, and I’m convinced I’ve seen a smug look or two crawl across ‘their silly little faces’ whenever talk of the low end came up...

...‘Smug looks’ that ended up rubbing me like a patronizing pat on the head — *I’d always whisper a silent prayer that “The Saint of Misguided, Clueless Souls” would lend these poor folks a hand.*

Ok, so I’m probably biased but I like to fool myself into thinking that;

- More than any other instrumentalists in your modern contemporary band, bassists (both upright & electric) have the ability to MOVE a listening crowd on the magnetic, pulse-like, unconscious level that's the closest thing to Jedi mind control known to the non-cave dwelling human.
- Bass players are easily the band's uncontested 'Big Brother', and have the power (*and responsibility*) to hold things together in the event that things start going cuckoo...
- The bass can, and should provide the single most **foundational and functional** connection to everything that's going on in a tune (*the harmony, rhythm and melody*) for the listener!

A functional bass line is literally like a 'tractor beam' (*now I sound like a Star Trek nerd huh?*) that anchors itself in the listener's ear and winches them in.

When a good bass line suddenly drops out of the mix of music, it's very likely that even the non-bass-loving listener, is instantly going to notice and feel that something is instantly missing.

- We, 'the great and mighty keepers of the low end' can single-handedly determine the interpretation of any chord in the overall harmony of a song that a listener hears -- more so than even *they, or the rest of the band* commonly realizes.

For example, if a keyboardist plays a C major chord, the bassist can determine whether that C major is 'heard' as an A minor or a C major.

(If you're a newbie reading this and you don't get how that's even possible don't worry. Just take my word for it – I'm usually right. ☺)

- No two ways about it, we are hipper than a wardrobe full of bell-bottoms, a closet full of platform shoes and a cabinet full of greasy hair activator. Translated?

We quite simply put the 'lamming' back in slamming baby!

So there's no question about it... **We rock hard and are easily one of the most weight-worthy instrumentalists in contemporary music.**

...Yet strangely enough I've seen websites that summarize the powerful enigma that is 'The Bottom End' into advice such as, "*Now all you have to do Sparky is learn a few important notes, sit next to a guitarist and have him call out the root notes and you too can be 'thumping away' playing beautiful bass in mere minutes!*"...

...I've read articles by non-players that boldly proclaim... "*The bass is probably the easiest instrument to learn and master... If you can learn where C, G and F are you're halfway there...*"

...I've seen musician's blogs suggest that a bassist's **ONLY** job is to "keep it simple", "stay out the way and let the other musicians (*the real big boys*) play"...

Now I've got a pretty good sense of humor.

I can take a good 'burn', because I love dishing them out too...

And I do understand and agree that in most musical outfits the electric bass is not often considered a 'feature' instrument, so yes it is often required to 'hold down the foundation' and 'keep it locked and simple' (*and all of those other catch phrases we like to use*) so I can get on board with that.

...I am also fully aware that the guy who overplays, often gets underpaid and 'more is less'... So no need to waste postage sending me that memo.

But what disturbs me is the fact that if we're not constantly guarding **our own perceptions**, there is so much misinformation floating around that even the best-intentioned of us 'wannabe-super-cool-crime-fighting bassists' can get caught into one of two subtle traps...

1. You either get caught up thinking that you should **NOT** be trying to 'up the ante' on your playing because bassists only have to play root notes and stay out of the way— It's literally taboo (*or sinful*) for you to ever dare to play anything more... or...
2. You think it's ok to ignore important **musical fundamentals**, while still on some subconscious level expect to see 'Gary Willis' results -- (*The bass being such an 'easy' instrument to master and all*).

Either way you end up tearing yourself apart and feeling cheated because you playing will feel like it's stuck in neutral!

Dig this.

If you've ever looked at a YouTube video, or a DVD or listened to a CD where the bass player is really inspiring you to want to play more, play faster, play better ideas, you have to realize something most people don't like to talk about...

One thing's for sure (*no matter what anyone tells you about keeping it simple and not needing to play all that stuff*)... **The guy on the CD who's inspiring you doesn't approach the instrument with the incorrect concept that the electric bass is somehow created a bit lower down the ladder than any other instrument...**

"...Either way you end up tearing yourself apart and feel cheated because you playing will feel like it's stuck in neutral!.."

He/she doesn't think it's wrong to want to create lines that are rhythmically, harmonically and melodically hipper... *(Now hold on there—I'm not saying that often times less isn't more, so don't go misquoting me.)*

What I'm saying is that for some reason there seems to be a disconnect that we hit as bass players.

On the one hand there is the idea that playing bass equals: Easy to master, simple straightforward root-note-only lines, keep it 'monkey simple' other wise you're doing it wrong...

On the other hand you listen to and hear bassists who are exciting, involved in the music they play, play lots of nice fills, long runs, get to solo, have fun, play fast and play slow etc... and for some reason they aren't criticized for 'being more involved'!

For some reason they are able to do **'more than just the root note'** without destroying the song... Now obviously 'context' comes into play but wouldn't you like the option of being able to 'be more involved' in creating more attractive music if needed?

Is it right to feel that you've sinned cardinally if you;

- Do play anything other than the root note for every chord...
- Do make a tasty fill in an open space...
- Do commit yourself to getting as solid a harmonic education as the fancy piano player...

...Are you 'out of place' to do so?

Let's face it...

The bassists who know when to break these 'cardinal rules' and aren't constantly 'walking on eggshells' are the ones who attract you to their playing!

And because nobody wants to be perceived as the 'lesser musician' it can be quite the quandary for the progressing player who then attempts to make his playing more lively only to be severely chastised for doing so.

"So what are you saying Alex?... That I need to go out and go out there and represent my instrument and show 'em whose boss?"

Slow down there young grasshopper.



"...The bassists who know when to break these 'cardinal rules' are the ones who attract you to their playing!"

I'm not saying you go 'busy up' every country bass line you're playing with a million notes to prove your worth.

If you do that the band will very likely put a bucket over your head and ask you to sit next to Tommy-Two-Toes who's playing the kazoo in the back.

What I'm saying is that;

- The mindset of the best players, even when they play simple lines is NEVER that the instrument is one where mastery is easy and being impressive doesn't require years practicing silly little things like 'understanding harmony' and real conscious musical thought.

What I'm saying is that;

- It is possible to have a lot more fun playing the instrument well and building more intricate lines without wreaking havoc on 'the hallowed groove' and the harmony *if* you understand how 'the rules' work.

What I'm saying is that;

- If you're part of a band and you are asked to 'please keep it simple' that doesn't necessarily mean that the bass line can't be made more interesting.

Chances are what they are most likely saying is this... "What you're doing Steve for some reason just isn't sitting right so we'd much rather that you just keep it simple and played one note".

Because you and I both know it — If Bunny Brunel walked into that very same situation and came up with a bass line that's somehow more rhythmically 'involved', more melodic and more harmonically open, he could make it sit well and the very band that was asking you to 'dumb it down' would likely welcome it.

So what's wrong with this picture? Is the bass dead easy to master or not? Is it taboo to want to be creative?

Well let's look at it like this...

Anyone learning to play the piano knows and expects a learning curve, a certain amount of due diligence and expects to have to work on theory and technique, in some cases for decades.

Someone learning the saxophone... Same thing... They know I gotta study theory, I gotta study technique and application... That's their mindset from the get-go.

Flute, Clarinet etc same deal...

So why then is it that so many folks who want to learn to play electric bass, think that the successful approach is;

- Learn where some notes are, or go get some tabs...
- Jam a few times with a CD player...
- Learn a few licks and then...

...it's supposed to be on like Donkey Kong?

(So again, why did the bass player miss his second lesson?)

Now I'm not suggesting that everyone reading this report is trying to attain to having Oteil Burbridge's skill.

I'm not suggesting that you have to practice 12 – 18 hours a day like some folks I know, to build a skill set that catches everyone's eye and makes other mere mortals bow at your feet.

I'm not suggesting that bassist aren't blessed by the fact that even without being 'progressive' there is a lot of work for you if you learn nothing more than some basics.

A lot of us are just gonna be playing leisurely on a hobbyist level. A lot of us just want to know where C, G, F and A are so we can rock out with our garage band.

But in my mind, whether Jazz or Country...

Bass lines with 10 notes per bar or 1 every 4 bars...

...Weekend warriors or touring pro...

...If your approach doesn't take into consideration some vital 'laws' **every musician has to abide by (including bass players)** you're doing yourself and anyone you happen to end up playing with a grave injustice because your approach and expectation of your role in a band could be fundamentally flawed.

I really hope you understand what I am saying. If not I'll try one last time to be really clear about it all...

I'm trying to get to the core of what is causing a lot of frustration for a lot of would be players... Trying to help you see why you feel like you're boxing with a long armed opponent.

On the one hand there is the idea that powerfully suggests to most players that bass is basic. It's simple, it's easy to play, it's only requirement is that is stay out of the way, be almost unheard, don't mess up the music and provide a foundation.

If that's the case, learning a few notes and some scales should easily put me in the driver's seat to be a phenomenal bassist right?

Well on the other hand we watch and listen to players all the time who have so much fun with the instrument, play such interesting ideas, get noticed and are still welcomed and appreciated parts of the band without stepping on everyone's toes.

Now for some reason we learn our scales, buy an expensive electric bass (just like the bad boys of bass use) retreat to our woodshed and years later still can't seem to figure out why in the world the results aren't coming the way they should.

And the first thing I'm trying to say to you to help clear the frustration you may be feeling (and give you some encouragement) is that;

Invisible Barrier #1 **You've Been Indirectly Lied To!**

- The electric bass may be easy to start playing, **that doesn't mean it's easy to master...**
- You may have to play less notes, **that doesn't mean that you should be a musical dwarf...**
- The instrument may have fewer strings, **that doesn't mean less constructive practice...**
- You may not be the feature instrument all the time, **that doesn't mean you have to have less fun...**
- You may be asked to 'play solid foundational ideas' **that doesn't mean they have to be harmonically brain dead... You can play a SOLID, groovy FUNCTIONAL bass line that is also interesting and fun... The two aren't mutually exclusive!**

On a subconscious level MANY of us expect/have been made to expect that, "This bass thing ain't that difficult a deal..."

Yes it's true you can perhaps learn to play some songs on the instrument in an afternoon if you're quick, and you can 'get by', but you can't fudge on setting the right



"... Learning some songs is NOT the equivalent learning to play bass..."

foundation, minimize what you see as the possibilities/requirements of your role and quarrel when you quickly get bored with your playing.

Merely learning some songs is NOT the equivalent of learning to play bass.

And if you're reading this report still I know you're one of those who wants more than to 'just learn' some songs.

So under-the-radar barrier number 1 is an incorrect mindset. And many of us are plagued with this even if we're not fully aware of it.

FACT: Bassists are benefited by having strong harmonic understanding and knowing some theory too! Just as much as the saxophonist does.

The bass isn't 'an easier guitar'...

Ok I'll drop it for now.

Let's just assume that you're rethinking how you approached the instrument or that you were already on the same page with me...

I want to continue by looking at four more invisible hurdles standing in your way if you're intent on being a better, more appreciated player.

I'll quickly run over the other four (4) sticking points as the right person reading this will instantly identify with them so I won't waste too much more time 'proving my point'.

Some of these won't win me any friends but that's cool... I was born alone.

Invisible Barrier #2

Incomplete Roadmaps

Invisible Barrier #2



There's no easy way to say this, so I'll just come right out, say it and face the firing squad after...

If you're what would be considered an average, *normal* person, (*not one of those rare boy geniuses who can play Jaco lines at the age of 4*) who is wanting to learn the bass and/or steadily improve your playing, there's a reason why most of the instructional video and printed material you purchase leave you feeling like you're not much further ahead than the weeks before you got them.

...In fact there are 3 big reasons I'm privy to that have nothing to do with your own short-comings. And the only reason I even know this is because of my unique insider's position in seeing how a lot of this stuff goes down.

Now I ain't into bashing and hating on other folks, so this ain't that.

...I ain't saying that other people's training stuff is no good, and that you should only buy stuff I put out, so there's no need to witch-hunt this report...

Heck, I buy other people's stuff all the time and many times I get a hold of something that truly delivers to me a lot of value. And for me personally **I AM ALWAYS LEARNING** but here's the low down on a large bulk of the 'instructional tapes and books' out there that most people are afraid to tell you, or simply can't tell you.

You ready for this?

And yeah... This doesn't even include the 'learn to play bass' products out there that are flat out scams, rip-offs and pure fluff written by non-players 'fronting' as bassists...

For now, we're ignoring all those low-ballers and talking only about the products created by decent well meaning folks, many of who really can play very well...

**"...I'd rather
you label the
video as 'Mr.
XXXX performs
Gospel/Rock/
Funk Bass'
rather than
'How to play
Gospel/Rock/
Funk Bass'..."**

Problem #1: Decent and well meaning or not the fact is that most off the shelf training videos and CDs are nothing more than 'big-shot-fancy-pants' performances and are unfortunately VERY low on real quality 'down in the trenches' meaty, step-by-step instruction.

And while I have a lot of respect for the known bass heroes out there, the sad truth is you can't assume that because a product is produced by a 'big-wig company' and features a 'bass virtuoso' it's going to mean squat for you!

(Just this week I picked up a couple new bass DVDs and within 3 minutes it was 1000% clear to me that the 'real content' in one of them was so thin it would break under the weight of a marshmallow!)

Could the guy play? Heck yeah! - Would I buy it again knowing what I know now? Nope.

Nuff said...

This kinda leads to a second strain of this problem I see folks like yourself face all the time...

Many, many outstanding players are messed up teachers!

They can play like crazy, but ask them to explain what they did or (worse yet) *why they did it*, and you're stuck with 'deep', 'profound' statements like, "Uh... Ok that was simple now you try..."

I'm sorry but I'd rather you label the video as 'Mr. XXXX performs Gospel/Rock/Funk Bass' rather than 'How to play Gospel/Rock/Funk Bass'... I'd still buy the DVD but at least I'd be expecting it to be nothing more than him showing-off his stuff.

I mean come on already...

I buy the DVD/book under the premise that I'm going to pick up a lot of 'how-to' information that will help me improve... The guy, who of course is a great bassist, goes through a bass line, solos for 3 minutes and does a slew of tricks that's obviously easy for him and then gives me the backing track with the drums...

Even if I rip and carbon copy what he played wouldn't it be a lot better if in addition to 'learning his vocabulary' I understood it's usage? Wouldn't I grow as a bassist a lot more from that?

Problem #2: From the remaining few who can teach, the next glitch in the system often falls in the hands of the big bad publishing companies...

Here's how this works.

First off remember... It's probably, maybe, kinda, perhaps, slightly possible that the 'big bad' publishing company just may have a lot of sway when a product is published through them.

And because of that, you can safely assume (probably, maybe, kinda, perhaps, it's slightly possible) that there are certain budget and economic parameters they set that must be adhered to.

Let me explain.

Say for example player X is contracted to do a training course with Hungry Hungry Publishers.

The creative department in tandem with the accounting department knows that;

- 1) There're 2 hours of studio time allotted for this shoot and you better get it all done because this needs to get to market in the next 45 days...
- 2) The product has to sell for \$XX so costs need to be kept to \$YY otherwise it's not going to be financially sound to produce it...
- 3) In order to produce a line of 200 different products to sell each customer over and over and over 200 times, each individual product can only be so detailed before we run out of new stuff to sell.

Ouch. You figure out the rest.

Again, I ain't hating.

I love all the good info out there on bass playing, I'm just trying to put things in context for you and explain why you something feel like pieces of the puzzle are missing.

Problem #3: And finally here's another piece of insider info most people do not know. Heck I didn't know this either until I overheard a couple folks talking about courses they did for a VERY well know publishing company.

Let's imagine we get an instructor who can teach with enough detail for the normal person to understand, truly wants to share openly to help the customers, he/she can play, and isn't pressured to chop up his presentation into a 40 minute tape or in a 30 page booklet, the next problem many self-studying bassist battle is the one I call "The Label-less Can 'o Corn".

Let me explain again. Here's how a good deal of instructionals are created.

Player is a genuine good guy (*like most are... I don't like adopting the attitude at all that everyone is out to rip me off, and I don't think you should either, but that's just me*) and he either decides to self-publish a product or he is approached by Big Bad Publishing house to do an instructional.

...Player agrees.

Good guy player digs up his old notebooks where he took notes either from his school days at Berklee, study with the private tutor he learnt with, or the lesson plans he prepared for the students he currently teaches. (These summarized 'notes' are the Can 'o Corn.)

By and large the finished product ends up being a collection of the player's own 'study material' that both he and his students agree are fabulous.

These lesson plans are great. They are nutritious... They are tasty and they are part of a good healthy bass diet.

There's just one problem...

There's a piece of the puzzle missing... Something you don't have that's supposed to complete the equation... The player/tutor himself! (The label on the can.)

You see, it's not that you can't learn on your own and be self taught. The vast majority of us are.

But the issue is that even with the good guys, the finished product may end up being a can o' corn without the preparation label.

Often time these lesson plans were never meant to *replace* the tutor... They were meant to be an outline of what he will teach to his students when they are face to face with him.

Look I do private lessons. I give them and I take them.

And if I was to take the hand outs I give to my face to face students, or the ones that my instructor gives me, slap them together and make a 42 page book, it'd be filled with awesome info, it'd truly have key concepts that can take most anyone's playing to outstanding heights, it'd be totally understandable to me but it simply won't be a home study course!

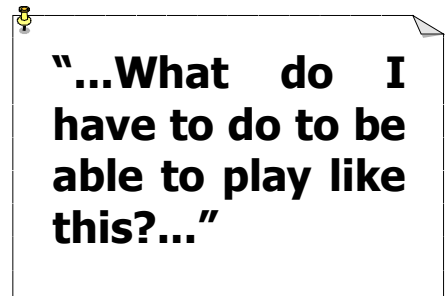
It'll more correctly be described as a curriculum or LESSON OUTLINE as opposed to a training guide.

(That's why when I do home study courses they end up being HUGE. I do them with the intention of giving the end user **every advantage I can think of** for him/her to study on their own and still feel like I've been there to explain every detail they needed.)

So is it that you won't see results from any other course but something I do?

Oh pluheez.

Let's not be ridiculous.



There's a lot of awesome material out there that will suit different people and the different ways they learn, and I encourage you to get whatever helps you— *(In fact I'd go as far as asking you to NOT get any of my stuff unless you really feel like I teach in a way that connects with you.)*

On top of that it often takes reading something from a couple different authors' points of view before it really clicks home. So go out there and purchase anything you think will be of value to your playing and if you find some good stuff, recommend it to me to.

If I don't already have it I may go get it myself.

All I'm trying to do is point out some of the reasons for the snags we commonly face in trying to 'home-school' ourselves.

Next time you use an A-Z instructional book that reads like this... A, D, G, M, Z you'd have an idea of what happened. You're probably trying to eat a can 'o corn w i t h o u t t h e l a b e l .

Now again to put things in perspective, I'm not looking to start any wars and quite frankly most times it's not our good-guy author's fault. He isn't trying to short change you or nothing. It's just the way stuff works out sometimes in the real world.

(I know there's a few folks out there who no matter what I say are going to interpret it the wrong way, and may think I'm trying to be mean about other folks' stuff so let me say it plainer.)

I own it all and will continue to buy it all. I am simply trying to explain why you feel like pieces of the puzzle are missing sometimes. Everything everyone of us does was birthed by something we picked up somewhere! - All props to everyone out there genuinely helping folks out!

There I said it! Let's move on.

"...What Structured study means is that you don't just 'jam' all willy-nilly and call it practice..."



Invisible Barrier #3

Flawed Practice Schemes

What happens when a practicing player is left on his own to come up with a practice schedule, set his own

goals for what that practice session should produce and decide when he's good and ready to move on and work at something else?

I'll tell you...

The bass player ends up, putting on his favorite DVD or CD brimming with purpose, intent on doing something meaningful that will give long term benefits to his playing.

He starts off maybe trying to copy a bass line with the hope of picking up a lot of 'real world' ideas along the way... At first he catches some of it then as it goes along his transcription of the bass line gets less and less accurate.

Before long he's quickly blown away by how fabulous a player his 'bass hero' is and is equally frustrated that he can't quite pull off what Bass-Hero-Man on the CD/DVD is doing.

Fifteen minutes later (after arbitrarily practicing his 'scales' he gets tired of that and decides to jam with a song, to 'learn a few hot licks or bass grooves'...)

This last for a good 7 minutes before the player is again blown away by ideas on the CD/DVD that he wish he'd thought of. Six minutes later he's sitting there thinking,

"Man... What do I have to do to be able to play like that??"

This cycle of intent purpose, being wowed, feeling like you're wayyyy behind, then randomly messing around continues for a total of 20 minutes or so before 'real life' calls (the wife, the husband, kids some emergency to deal with, TV, work etc.)...

The 'practice' session abruptly ends... The flame of excitement the weekend warrior started off with 25 minutes ago is long extinguished, but of course he promises himself that starting next week, he's gonna get serious about making his playing better.

Next week comes around where he watches another DVD, attends another concert/church service/shed session where he's blown away and pumped up to 'take his playing to the next level' and the cycle starts again.

Wash, rinse, repeat.

So... What happens when a practicing player is left on his own to come up with a practice schedule, set his own goals for what that practice session should produce and decide when he's good and ready to move on and work at something else?

The answer is quite often;

NOT MUCH!!

Let me tell you something that most people probably don't know...

'Self taught' or not most all the best players often have some form of structured study behind them somewhere in their playing history!

I'll say it again. MOST of the electric bassists you admire have some form of 'schooling' hidden below their belt.

Now don't get me wrong.

When I say schooling I'm not saying that they all necessarily went to Berklee, The Collective or The Musician's Institute.

What I am saying is that if you check into the history of any "Bass-Hero-Man" there is some form of **structured, guided study in there...**

Maybe it was a few private lessons...

Maybe a few correspondence classes by mail...

Maybe they had a mentor at their local church they were fortunate enough to hang around...

Many times it was formal school...

Fact is, there was some type of **informed, directly plotted course** that told them, *"You work on this, this and this. And you do so until you accomplish this, this and this. Then you work on this, this and this..."* Some type of guidance into what to work on now...

And again, this structured study isn't necessarily a face to face tutor, (although that's fantastic if you can make that happen).

Structured study means is that you don't just 'jam' all willy-nilly and call it practice.

Structured study says that I spot a weakness in my playing that is crucial for my development... I work at strengthening that weakness and I chart my progress...

And folks, that's all that schools like Berklee, The Collective and The Musician's Institute facilitate...

They are basically well paid for providing a guided plan of study that you are held to. The raw information that most people spent \$120K to learn at a top music school is for the most part available in many courses for a total cost of below \$500. *(Sidenote just so you know, at the time of writing a music education at Berklee can easily top \$42,000 per year!)*

[See their website here.](http://www.berklee.edu/bt/163/quest.html) <http://www.berklee.edu/bt/163/quest.html>

But the problem is that if left totally up to yourself most people are gonna end up watching 'Lost' and 'Family Guy' reruns when they should be practicing. **Most people don't know what to work on.**

That's what people pay big money for. You thought it was the information?

Not really. *(The value is in having a guided hand, who can also hold you accountable.)*

I heard it said, and I believe it by the way, that there's information online available for free that can teach anyone who has access to Google everything a heart surgeon knows about heart surgery.

The problem is filtering this incomprehensible amount of info...

The problem is knowing what's most important and what isn't...

The problem is sticking to a schedule of study that ensures you cover the necessities...

The problem is having some type of **standard** and progress tracking that says,

"Yes Martin you've covered this and this in a manner that is sufficient to allow you to cut people's chest open"...

So that's why for the life of me I can't understand people who refuse to pay for good information (in any field) whining that "I can learn all of this online for free"...

Of course you can Goober, but then again you can learn heart surgery online for free too can't you?

So what do you work on first?

I'll be talking a lot more about this in a while and even giving some specific suggestions for such structured practice sessions so for now let's move on.

Just bear in mind what this hurdle is...

- 1) If you spend more than 50% of your time playing stuff you are already comfortable playing,
- 2) If you 'practice' by randomly jamming with the CD/DVD player and that's about all that your practice really entails and...
- 3) If you ultimately waste effort doing random stuff that's not really contributing to our development...

It's no wonder you feel stuck.

No matter if what you were doing took 3 ‘intense’ hours, what you were doing (sorry to sound mean) was randomly goofing off and you’re not getting maximum benefit from the time you spend with your instrument.

Is any of this hitting home to you?

I mean this is real stuff people.

These are the things we all do that cause us to shoot ourselves in the foot, and if you’re honest with yourself a lot of what I’m saying should surely hitting home to you.

We’ll keep reading... There’s more.

Invisible Barrier #4 **Tight-lipped Players**

I always like to draw comparisons that suggest in many regards music is a language like any other.

And a lot of learning any language is in mimicking what you hear said, to help build your own vocabulary.

Think of how an infant learns to speak. (Which by the way is why I don’t like to see grown adults talking ‘baby talk’ to a child who’s mind is ready to start learning to speak, but hey that’s just me.)

So if we learn through conversation would it be a problem if no one ever wanted to talk to you?

Maybe. ☺

The thing is, (and this is just the plain truth) some folks are plain old stingy.

It’s like you ask them to show you a thing or two, they’re always too busy.

They’re jamming you come to close and start watching their hands to intently, they instantly start moving around all arbitrarily, turning around to tweak their amps and getting all bugged out because you’re watching...

Come on man, that’s not cool.

I specifically remember cornering players (*and I am sure you have too*) to ask about something they played and the explanation was “*Man I was just messing around. You don’t even want to learn that stuff, that’s super basic*”...



Now I'm not complaining now and I didn't complain then. I know, if I'm not paying for personal attention, no one owes me anything in the line of revealing any of their playing secrets. So don't whine about it.

It just made me more determined. So I found tutors and found a way to **PAY WHAT THEY ASKED!**

It just that most times even the dudes who are really guarded about even having a simple conversation with someone who's looking for advice are the same ones who got a ton of open help from some one else...

Let's be real folks. Almost none of the stuff that anyone plays is truly newly invented and 'never-before-played' stuff. The guy who's 'really good' but is really stingy doesn't own any musical idea.

We're all working at putting our signature, our mark, on our playing but the honest truth is consciously or subconsciously we're playing what we heard someone else, somewhere play...

Context may be different... Articulations may be different... We may mix and match, but truth be told we're all just playing different combinations of **the same 12 notes**.

Think of it like this...

By most estimations there are over 250,000 distinct English words (not double-counting those that have more than one meaning like, 'light' and 'run' etc.) yet it's said that **the top 300 most common words make up about 65% of all the written material in the world!**

Imagine that... From Shakespeare to Marvel comic books, Albert Einstein to Nancy Drew novels... Economics textbooks to Barney the dinosaur coloring books... Of all the written words in the world we make use of only 300 (less than 0.0015%), **almost 70% of the time!**

Furthermore we all speak and converse with each other based on stuff we heard someone else say.

So why am I saying this?

Well it should be obvious. Would you not speak in front of someone so that they couldn't learn a sentence? ☺

I mean I'd do FREE videos on my blog and openly share the thinking and note-by-note break down of everything I did and it's not in my mind to 'hold back'.

So while no one owes you anything if you're not specifically paying them to give you their time, (so don't go getting all mad and demanding now folks) it's just that I find it a little funny that some people are almost psychotically paranoid about guarding everything they know. Almost as if you learning something makes them less knowledgeable.

Here's a hint though, and this is where jamming with the CD/DVD player comes in.

At your local Borders, your iTunes music store or wherever it is you buy your CDs there are literally thousands upon thousands of years of concentrated, practiced musical speech.

If you don't have cool bassists around you, go get good CDs and listen to them religiously and intently.

But here's the \$10,000 tip right here...

As soon as you learn something, ditch the fear get out there and find a real live band to jam with so you can practice your own speech. Oh yeah... Don't be stingy about it too. The people with the most open attitude always end up with the most ;-)

The reason is because it is scientifically proven that the sooner you teach or openly repeat something you learnt (like a joke for example) the faster and more powerfully it is embedded into your long term memory.

And the guys you need to listen to... (*James Jamerson, Jaco Pastorius, Anthony Jackson, Jerry Jemmott, Scott Le Faro, Ron Carter, Stanley Clarke, Tom, Kennedy, Paul McCartney, Steve Swallow, Dave Holland, John Patitucci, Christian McBride, Abraham Laboriel, Maurice Fitzgerald, Andrew Gouche, Terrence Palmer, Alain Caron, Bunny Brunel, Francis Rocco Prestia, Victor Bailey, Marcus Miller, Flea etc, etc, etc, etc...*) are all willing to repeat anything they played in the privacy of any studio for you 27 billion times if you like.

And if you're smart like I know you are and want to immerse yourself in the music of these folks I just outlined, just do a little Google search for their name and the word discography... For example just search in Google.Com for "Anthony Jackson +discography"...

...Check out their websites and when you can pick up an album or two. ;-)

Translated

"I ain't giving you none of my hard earned licks that I ripped off of some other dude when he wasn't watching!"

Or they more plainly tell you something like, *"It no use to you my just telling you... Go figure it out..."*

Man I sure am funny sometimes huh?

I'm not sure if you've encountered 'stingy' musicians but I sure have. (And I don't just mean bassists).

Invisible Barrier #5 **Scattered Focus**

And now the final sticking point I'll bring up is a biggie and is kinda tied into all of the others I mentioned before.



I'll preface this by saying again, that I'm not assuming that everyone's ultimate goal is world bass domination, but I think you'll surely agree that as your desire for increased levels of competency raise, so too do the number of factors you have to focus on as a player also increase.

In other words, the person desirous of belonging to a working 4 piece jazz-fusion group that plays clubs 3 nights a week and covers the music of Alain Caron, Chick Corea and the likes will have far more stuff to be good at, than the 67 year old grandfather who is only trying to pick up the instrument to help pass some time with his grandson in the evening before dinner.

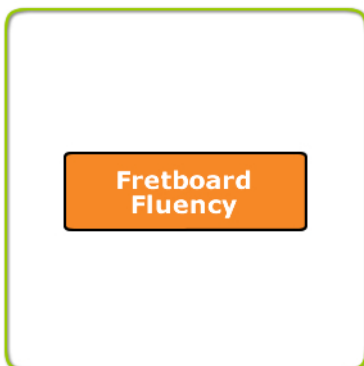
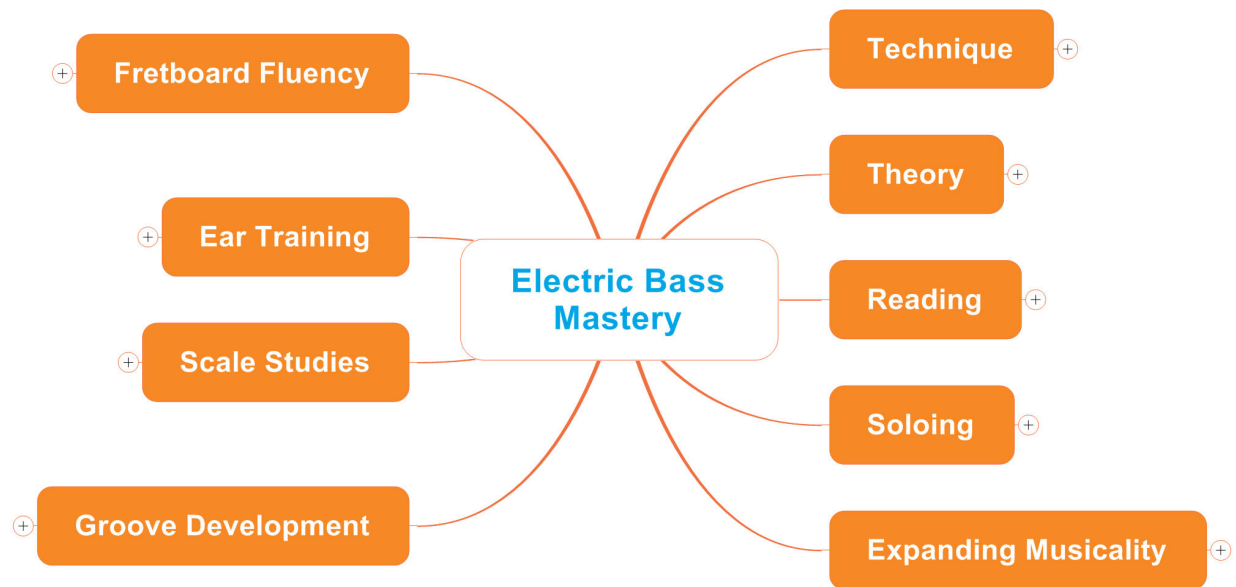
Where ever you find yourself along that sliding scale is perfectly fine but I've taken the time to plot out just SOME of the things that instantly came to mind when I think of starting to get into more PROGRESSIVE bass playing.

Now please be aware this list is NOT exhaustive, and some terms might not make sense to you depending on your current level of playing. Just take this at face value for now.

Playing bass includes a lot of core competencies and here are a few of them, all of which are important at some point in time.

We'll start with just 9 core competencies and then flesh them out a bit... (See Next Page)

The Progressive Bass Player's Mind Map



“Fretboard Fluency” includes;

- ◆ Learning note names
- ◆ Being able to see chord tones anywhere on the fretboard
- ◆ Spotting intervals & degrees immediately
- ◆ Spotting chord/scale common tones
- ◆ Playing ascending & descending arpeggio patterns
- ◆ Etc. Etc. Etc.

**Groove
Development**

- ◆ Creating walking bass lines
- ◆ Locking with drummer
- ◆ Developing groove 'hooks'
- ◆ Learning genre 'characteristics'
- ◆ Practicing time-keeping/Rhythmic sub-divisions
- ◆ Learning core groove notes
- ◆ Studying famous lines
- ◆ Double stops
- ◆ Tone shaping/Finding your voice
- ◆ Poly-rhythms
- ◆ Dynamics

**Theory/Harmony
Studies**

- ◆ Chord harmonization
- ◆ Scales & their application
- ◆ Scale substitution over chords
- ◆ Enharmonic note naming
- ◆ Understanding common progression
- ◆ Secondary dominants
- ◆ Cadence
- ◆ *Lots more...*

**Building
Technique**

- ◆ Building clean speed
- ◆ Developing finger independence
- ◆ Left hand/Right Hand coordination
- ◆ Muting
- ◆ Controlling Open String Resonance
- ◆ String skipping
- ◆ Building hand/wrist stamina
- ◆ Chording
- ◆ Natural & artificial harmonics
- ◆ Playing 'slap' (thump & pluck style)
- ◆ Two hand tapping
- ◆ 'Ghosting' notes

Soloing/ Improvisation

- ◆ 'Voice' leading
- ◆ Arpeggio variations & inversions
- ◆ Scale application
- ◆ Phrasing
- ◆ Referencing and motif story-telling
- ◆ Quoting
- ◆ Melodic structures
- ◆ Leading/Approach tones
- ◆ Transcriptions
- ◆ *You get the idea...*

Reading Music

- ◆ Rhythmic studies
- ◆ Note recognition
- ◆ Familiarity with Bass & Treble clef
- ◆ Finding notes on bass while reading
- ◆ Notating music
- ◆ Enharmonic spelling
- ◆ *List goes on...*

Expanding Musicality

- ◆ Spending time in “focused listening”
- ◆ Playing transcriptions
- ◆ Articulation studies
- ◆ Non-Diatonic/Chromatic flavoring
- ◆ Developing your own vocabulary
- ◆ *There's more...*

A white rectangular box with rounded corners and a thin green border. Inside the box is an orange rectangular button with the text "Scale Studies" in white.

Scale Studies

- ◆ Learning modes & their application
- ◆ Knowing multiple patterns for scales/modes
- ◆ Understanding degrees & scale formulas
- ◆ Melodic motifs & licks
- ◆ Playing sequences
- ◆ Analyzing/Playing famous solos
- ◆ *You've got your work cut out here...*

A white rectangular box with rounded corners and a thin green border. Inside the box is an orange rectangular button with the text "Ear Training" in white.

Ear Training

- ◆ Recognizing melodic intervals
- ◆ Recognizing harmonic intervals
- ◆ Chord spelling
- ◆ Sight singing
- ◆ Call & response
- ◆ *Years of practice...*

...Wanna see what just those 9 core competencies kinda fleshes out to be? (*brace yourself*)



So now, all things considered, if you've ever been frustrated with your progress, overwhelmed with the amount of work you need to get done, or just plain tired – is there any wonder why?

I don't know what you know about how important **FOCUS** is in achieving momentum but do you see that 'dabbling' a little in this and a little in that from this huge pool of 'stuff' to focus on could leave you frazzled?

Seriously, not to sound grim but if you're working with;

- ◆ An adhoc practice schedule/plan of attack...
- ◆ Stingy/no bass friend/mentor...
- ◆ Method books/DVDs that are more like performances /curriculum instead of play-by-play full fledged lessons...
- ◆ A zillion factors asking for attention *vs* limited time to practice them...
- ◆ The sub-conscious mindset that bass is dead easy to master/has the least involved role to play in the band...

...Your chances of success are literally **HOSSED** from the get go!

(Ok so I'm kidding a bit, you're not hosed, but I'm sure you can see that some of these problems may have affected you some way or the other in the past right?)

Maybe now you can give yourself a break if you're not seeing the kinda progress you want to when you realize the kinda odds you're fighting. Like I said earlier it not necessary that you are potential any worse a bassist than the bassist next door... Some people have just found better ways of dealing with these barriers.

Now that you know what they are you are one Giant Step closer to beating them yourself.

But really... Are you're surprised that your results are marginal at best though?

So now that we know what the problems are, what do we do? I'm glad you asked... That's what we're gonna focus on in part 2 of this e-book.

“The Most Progressive Practice Sessions In the World...”

Or

The ‘Magic Key’ to Destroying Invisible Barriers

Now I use the words ‘magic key’ above kinda tongue and cheek but in all seriousness what I’m about to share with you here is possibly one of the most liberating and potential-expanding paradigm shifts you could ever achieve.

I know that sounds a bit ‘hypey’ and far fetched, but I firmly believe that if you truly get this fix in perspective you instantly open up your world to achieve things that you previously thought were way out of reach.

Connect with this and I guarantee that you’ll be encouraged and fired up at the possibilities there are for you with your bass playing.

There’s a common feeling most all of us get when we feel stuck in a rut that is really defeating and highly limiting. So much so that, if allowed, it can permanently snag all our future efforts and even have some of us just give up on the instrument.

I mentioned before that there is still a lot of time for you, starting today to plot out a course that sees you become a darn good bassist and here’s why. I also went to great lengths to prove that every practicing bassist (musician) has to battle a laundry list of ‘invisible barriers’ that work very well at keeping us motionless.

Now I’m a huge fan of studying successful people in all walks of life... The Michael Jordan’s... The Oprah Winfrey’s... The Bill Gates’... The Donald Trump’s... The Andrew Carnegie’s... and the James Watts’ of the world.

And there’s something I picked up that I didn’t expect to learn from studying all these phenomenal people... This discovery almost goes against the grain of what you’d expect to find.

Want to know what I found out?



“...Connect with this and I guarantee that you’ll be encouraged and fired up...”

I realized that for every naturally gifted, born prodigy there is out there who makes a significant mark on the world there are 1000 more geniuses who were at first 'NORMAL', 'NON-SPECIAL', 'NON-GIFTED' people who simply worked harder at their skill than the next guy!

Now I'm not sure if that hits home with you but when I truly realized the depth of that statement it almost knocked me flat off my chair.

And here's why...

Almost every bassist reading this report who is feels mortally stuck in a rut, and desperately wants to start seeing some forward movement in their playing ability sooner or later encounters a place where they think that the other guy... 'The Bass-Hero-Man' on YouTube, at the music store, on stage at your church, playing in the well-respected club in the heart of the city, is so dramatically different and special that 'little old me' could never do anything near that.

Now I'm a realist.

I don't believe that everyone can be anything they want to be. I think that if you're 3 feet tall and 52 years old, chances are you're not going to be a NBA star.

I've also come to learn that there is a tier of people who are SIMPLY GIFTED and have an almost magical intangible quality that makes them quite simple different.

These are the prodigies of the world.

When you look at a young bassist such as Hadrien Feraud it is clear that some people quite simply have an undeniably deposit of magic dust...

YES! they have to work hard to, but they are able to do stuff that the Average Joe simply can't obtain through studying **the mere mechanics of what they do.**

Now it difficult sometimes to tell a player who's got raw talent (the prodigy) from the player who has genius through practiced skill, but truth be told that's GREAT news!

Because it's so hard to tell it is proof that even those who are not prodigies can be outstanding.

So here the deal...

If you were to categorize all the bassists in the world and was somehow able to separate the prodigies into there own sect, the very next level down from them... (Where you have guys who are masters through practiced skill) is undoubtedly attainable to more people than you'd ever imagine.

And that's the magic key...

It's the fact that while there are the Michael Jordons of basketball who break the laws that operate in any field, there are people who can come darn close to that through nothing but dedicated practice!

I'm not sure if that excites you but it **ignites my passion to practice** every time I think about it.

When you truly get the facts that;

1. Well honed 'skill' can very often proximate raw God given talent and...
2. Skill, any 'skill', is simply a result of enough mechanical repetition

You should be dancing semi-naked in the streets.

Now I know what you're thinking...

You're thinking, "Well won't I just sound mechanical?" and my response is that even the things that 'create' interest can be LEARNT.

The elements of interest that are present in the best bass solo can be LEARNT because some notes sound better than others... Some factors such as repetition and symmetry and placing strong notes on strong beats can all be LEARNT.

...One can even LEARN to improvise even if you think that sounds paradoxical.

So when you see 'Bass-Hero-Man' on stage and you're blown away by what is literally ROUTINE stuff for him, there is a good chance that it's not 'routine' because he was born with absolute pitch so clear he could tell the pitch his dad's keys made when they hit the floor when he was five years old...

That's the rare case. And sure those rare cases do exist but if that was the only source of genius, there would be far fewer people in this world worth looking up to.

What looks impossible to you is 'routine' to him because he's played it 1,075,453 times.

Don't quote me on this but I'm pretty sure I heard it said from a pretty reliable source that even the incomparable Bass Legend Jaco Pastorius would often play solos on stage that were meticulously rehearsed... Note by note.

For some people that would come as a shock. They would be appalled. How could someone as bass 'almighty' as the incredible Jaco not always create his solo on the fly?

Well for some of us that should be quite encouraging... Quite liberating. It shows me dedication. It shows me a normal guy, who's as concerned about sounding good as the rest of us doing what it took to sound good...

Was Jaco undeniably gifted? — In my mind yes!...

Did you work like crazy honing his skill? — Darn straight he did!

Steve Swallow tells stories of being a ‘terrible electric’ bassist even when he was already on tour... So much so that another bass player he knew would almost daily poke fun at him.

What did he do? Practiced.

I’m not saying at all that these folks aren’t gifted. Of course they are.

...What I am saying is that many of us may be gifted but we don’t know till we put in enough work...

...What I am saying is that even if you don’t think you’re particularly gifted you can make up for it with progressive practice, and after looking at the practice schedules of truly great musicians I can tell you that there are 7 key ingredients that are always present.

If you’re interested in progressing your playing and getting over the excuse of ‘who’s got natural talent’ then check out the next section now!

“The Seven P’s of Progressive Practice...”

Right now I want to give you what I call **The Seven P’s of Progressive Practice.**

If you can get on board with the fact that you can become a FAR better bassist if you had a structured form of study like many of your own bass heroes had, then these are the 7 ingredients you want to make sure you add to the mix.

After this section we’ll take a closer look at five exact areas I’ll have you focus this ‘progressive practice session’ on, and we’ll look at some sample schedules, but first the bigger picture.

Progressive Practice Sessions Are; **Planned**

The very first thing you need to do if you desperately want to start seeing some forward movement out of ‘the bass playing doldrums’ is to set up a specifically planned practice session...

Remember earlier we spoke of the fact that most every impressive bassist you meet secretly has some type of structured learning methodology behind them, somewhere in their past/present?

Well this is the first step towards moving in that direction.

In other words ‘practicing’ what they want, when they can, for how long they are ‘good and comfortable with’ didn’t cut it.

Now I’m not assuming that everyone’s lifestyle is so leisurely built to allow them to say that they are going to practice for 2 hours every day and be able to keep that up.

Neither am I saying that your bass playing is necessarily one of the core centers of your existence.

So realistically most people will have to do just that... Practice as they have the time.

But dig this...

If, for whatever reason, you feel stuck and that feeling disgusts you enough that you want to move from that place really bad you need to recognize that nothing is going to happen if you leave your 'practice' for 'whenever'.

Here's an idea that's gonna work like gangbusters... Don't argue with it please — Just DO IT.

When you feel like you hit a dry spell, try to set up just a 10 – 14 day schedule that YOU DO NOT MISS (at least 30 minutes a day).

Set up what ever time you can, like 30 minutes a day, 40 minutes a day, that is done at a specific time if possible (so if you can, do something like start at 7 PM every day, and keep that habit for the entire period) and **go for at least 10 – 14 days EVERY SINGLE DAY and do NOT skip a day for any reason.**

I'm not kidding...

So you say that you're not able to do this on a everyday-for-the-rest-of-your-life basis, well administer this when you get stuck. Plot a 10 – 14 day schedule, 30 minutes each day starting at the same time each day.

Also folks please try NOT to over think this. Don't get into micro analyzing this so much that it gets almost anal... In other words don't let it be an issue that because of how you work you can't practice at 7pm everyday...

Don't sit and examine your schedule for 3 weeks before you decide what time you can practice. The biggest thing is consistency. If you can work every day at the same time then fabulous.

If it's impossible you can still work this method as long as you keep it as consistent as you can.

That's the first thing.

Stop over thinking and just decide on a time slot NOW. Right this minute before you read any further — Decide to do 30 minutes starting TODAY and do not skip a day.

NO EXCUSES!

Progressive Practice Sessions Are; **Purposeful**

I already explained how most people's practice sessions go.

They sit down with the bass and the CD player, turn on a song and randomly 'jam' with it trying to 'pick up the bass line and some of the runs and licks' that 'Bass-Hero-Man' was playing.

Or perhaps it's a DVD... You put it on and at the start you're brimming with determination...

Soon enough they crash, because the guy on the CD/DVD is able to do stuff they can't. And after trying really hard to *get it*, they eventually start feeling like my kid nephew does when he tries to box with me...

Like it's just out of reach and not worth trying.

So they end up just sitting and listening to the DVD performance and commenting to themselves how great a player that guy is.

Here's what's up with that.

IT DON'T WORK!

Every SINGLE time you sit down to 'practice' there needs to be a specific purpose for your practicing.

Now below I'll outline some of the things that you want to give focus to when you do sit to get the practice time in, but do keep this in mind...

When I sit to practice my mindset is something like this...

"I realize that my string skipping on this passage was weak. I need to work on THIS. And no matter how unattractive and un-sexy it is, that's what I am working on for the duration of the allotted time."

And I do NOT allow my CD/DVD player to distract me/dictate my route.

Remember, this guy on the player is already at the point you want to be. He's out there making cash, playing, having fun, people gawk over his playing...

It's fine to jam with him, but at the end of the day he's already put in the work needed to sound the way he does... *You're the one who's behind and needs to do the catching up.*

So if it means saying, *"Hey mister super hot bass ninja, you're cool and everything and I love jamming with ya, but right now I need to ignore distractions and get to work like you did*

several years ago (and still likely do every day) if I ever hope to be as good as you. So please don't feel hurt... Soon as I'm done doing some purposeful work I'll be back to hang out ok?"

Try it – I do and I've never had one DVD get angry with me yet... Somehow they all seem to understand.

So find a particular purpose for each and every practice session and center the bulk of your time around it.

Progressive Practice Sessions Are; **Persistent**

I mentioned this before but it's important enough to get a mention again.

Here's something I try to live by. Someone once told me that he can predict my overall success level at ANY thing I try to do with scary accuracy if he was allowed to look at one week's worth of my habits.

I have come to believe that unwaveringly.

We are the sum total of our habits and nothing else.

So not only must our practice session be planned... Not only should it be purposeful, **it MUST always be persistent.**

That's why I told you NOT to miss a single day when you do plan your 14 day blitz.

Here are two other things I know... Our brains are the most remarkable things. I read once that there was an experiment done by NASA to train astronauts.

They wanted to see how quickly the brain can adapt and evolve to creating a new reality if necessary. So they set up these living quarters and got the test subjects to wear glasses that made everything look up-sided down.

For the first 3 – 5 days the test subjects had a ridiculous time. I imagine it was as funny as a Dave Chappelle marathon.

Long story short though, by day 30 the folks were moving around the room and living as NORMAL, even though there were still wearing the silly glasses.

But that's not all!

They then took the glasses off and had them try to live there for another 30 days...

Guess what... They were bumping into stuff and it was funny again for another 30 days.

The point is that the brain was able to change its idea of reality and adapt to suit.

It's said that if you want to become a writer you can 'trick' your mind into thinking that a writer is who you are by 'buckling down' and WRITING a little everyday — Doing so for 15 minutes every morning without skipping a day for about 30 days.

30 days is how long it takes to get the brain to be tricked into a new habit. After that, the brain will start believing that this is who you are. You are a writer and as such you almost magically won't have a problem committing to do the writing you need to everyday.

If it means getting language lessons, doing so will come easily for you. You'll find yourself 'magically' remembering the meaning of words easier and so on.

Most people have problems keeping a decent practice schedule and can't see REAL progress because they can't break that 30 day ceiling.

Earlier I recommended 14 days for the busy lives we have, but the truth is I am hoping that by the time you get to day 14 you'll see that 30 days ain't that far away.

Here's one more piece of information that will help you stay the course... (Don't quote me as I'll paraphrase this but) I also read something to the effect that if did something 7 days a week you are 100% MORE likely to remain consistent than if you did that same thing 6 times a week!

...and 300% MORE likely than if you did it 4 times a week...

Point? - That just missing a SINGLE DAY in a routine can make a mind-blowing difference.

Don't MISS A DAY.

Progressive Practice Sessions Are; **Partitioned**

This one is easy and goes along with the 'planned practice' requirement.

I try my best to partition my practice time into easily discernable sections. So if I have 2 hours today, I may do something like this...

- ♦ 10 minutes – slow warm up exercises
- ♦ 30 minutes – playing scales and mode cycles with my metronome
- ♦ 20 minutes – fretboard familiarity work
- ♦ 30 minutes – transcriptions
- ♦ 30 minutes – free playing and application of harmonic concepts

If you want to be a well rounded bassist you've already seen that there's a lot of stuff to work on.

So in a minute I'll give you 3 practice regimens... One for a 30 minute session, 1 hour session and a 90 minute session. If you can practice more than that then good on you.

Progressive Practice Sessions Are; **Perfect**

Students of mine have been hearing this for years. There's a saying that practice makes perfect and it couldn't be MORE TRUE.

Practice DOES in fact make you perfect... **But only perfect at doing what you practiced!**

So if you practice and make a lot of errors while you're doing that, you'll be an ace at playing and pulling off errors like nobody's business!

If you want to be perfect in the right sense of the word then you need to practice perfectly.

So then it's more correct to say that only Perfect Practice makes Perfect.

I've said this a million times and I'll say it again because the average bass player ignores me when I say it.

If you are practicing something and are making a bunch of errors while doing it you are GOING TO FAST. For the love of all things good and holy, please slow down to the point you can do it perfectly.

I am trying to be clear because I don't want it to be that I am at fault here for not being clear.

Slow down means slow down.

Get the metronome out, play your scales, exercises what ever with that. Try as best as you can to practice with a metronome every time you do.

Now if you're bumbling and falling all over yourself slow it down until you can execute without error. YES that means that if you have to slow down the exercise to the ridiculous tempo of 50 bpm then that's what you DO.

You swim in the kiddies pool no matter how ridiculous you feel. When you can execute that tempo PERFECTLY then you move on.

I generally do like this. If I'm playing a scale across the entire fretboard and I start with 100 bpm, if I can repeat that flawlessly say 7 times I up the tempo by 5 – 10 bpm.

This way I incrementally sneak up on my brain and trick it into not noticing the very small tempo change.

Like most players in the know I use my metronome as a tool for **measurement of improvement**.

A metronome is a NECESSARY tool for a bassist. The one I use and recommend is the KORG Beatlab Digital Metronome. Do a Google search for stores you can get it at. Last I checked it was about \$100 but was worth the buy.

It's one of the best most feature-filled yet price effective metronomes I've come across. So stop getting hung up on details and go get one soon as you're able... If that's too pricey don't make that an excuse for delaying in getting a metronome...

If you can't afford that then get a cheaper one. Again just DO IT.

Progressive Practice Sessions Are; **Pushed**

Now we just got done talking about doing stuff perfectly and I can't let that sit without throwing in the other side of the coin.

While I do FULLY and totally endorse the fact that when you're practicing something you need to do it perfectly to embed the right message in your brain, I also believe fully and totally that you need to PUSH yourself the way a weight lifter/body builder does.

And by pushing yourself I don't *only* mean doing things faster, I mean doing things that you find uncomfortable. (You know... That finger exercise you consistently avoid like the Bubonic Plague because you sound like a 3 year old doing it.)

You see I've come to realize that we actually CAN do more than we think we can. There's this little buffer that we have around our core competency that we are able to stretch to.

For example have you ever had to reach for something at the top of a shelf that you eventually got although it at first seemed like it was an inch or two out of your grasp?

Now I'm not talking about something that's 12 inches out of reach. I mean something that if we just casually raise our hands it'd seem out of reach. But when we stretch we're there.

So I don't want you to practice stuff that is ONLY casually within you reach! I always try to DO at least one uncomfortable thing in each of my practice sessions.

I'll give you an example.

Many people when they practice a scale will start on one of these notes sub consciously.

C, G, A or D...

Have you ever asked yourself why?

Well on the bass the key really shouldn't matter should it? I mean if the C scale is a pattern, you can move that around the bass with out much worry.

But the notes I just gave, are notes that are 1) easily spotted and 2) are marked on the fretboard by dots.

If the same person tries to do a D# major scale they bump around. Because d# ain't situated on no dot.

So when I realize something like this happening in my playing, (I'm getting a hard time playing one thing) I tackle it.

I don't retreat from it and just go back to the thing I am comfortable at.

I believe that this is ONE of the single biggest reasons most people *remain* stuck. There are some scales and modes that truthfully are a pain in the butt to learn so they are ignored...

Some techniques that seem to take forever to learn so they are ignored...

Some exercises that are boring the white blood cells outta you so they are ditched...

All because these things fall in the uncomfortable box.

So how do we ratify this with our perfect practice goal? Well simple.

First we tackle some uncomfortable thing in each practice session. It doesn't need to be a new thing each time, just make sure you're doing something that is pushing your skill level a bit.

And secondly if you're trying to push yourself 'speed wise' here's a little trick. It's based on a concept used by track and field athletes, football and basketball players etc.

If you've ever seen a track athlete train with a harness attached to himself pulling a weight... A basketballer practicing lay-ups with weights on his ankles you know where I'm going.

Here's how I apply it. If you're doing a scale exercise at 100bpm chances are you can do it at 103bpm.

Raise the metronome temporarily to 110 and push yourself for a few rounds...

When you come back to the 100 bpm you'll see that you're almost magically able to pull it off and it seems like a walk in the park. *(In this example 100 bpm is where you're working at perfecting the passage, the 110 tempo is just to stretch yourself out a bit.)*

If you want to progress to a tempo of 105, get it under your fingers a bit then temporarily push your self to 115. Do that a few times till you're almost getting it then re-adjust the tempo down to 105 again and so on.

That's a pretty decent way of extending your reach but more than anything else ALWAYS look for that one lick, that one song, that one scale, that one exercise that is currently outside of your comfort zone and tackle the bugger HEAD ON.

Progressive Practice Sessions Are; **Patient**

Now frustration ain't an easy thing, and while some people might think that learning to play better bass is not that big a deal some people do!

I deal with *a lot* of bass players and it's not a strange thing for me to get emails from folks who feel stuck learning a scale or understanding modes and they literally sound like it's a life or death situation.

Look I know that no one likes feeling stuck, and it's very possible that playing bass is more important to you than to the next dude but get this.

I guarantee you that if you're stuck, knocking your head against the wall and beating up on yourself isn't going to solve anything.

I've gotten emails from folks that go like this...

"Alex I've been trying to understand modes and one little thing about it is confusing me, and if I don't get this I can't go on, my bass future is doomed and I'll go into a manic depressive state for the rest of my life."

Please Alex don't let my world crumble. If I can't figure out why to play a Lydian mode over a major 7 children in Africa will be subject to the bubonic plague and I just can't let that happen! For God's sake man!"

Now obviously I'm exaggerating this and I'm certainly not making fun of anyone but the point is this...

Sometimes, just sometimes, you just gotta roll the gauge back a bit, exhale and maybe work on something else.

Sure you gotta attack and work on expanding your comfort zone but if one thing's sure is that you're not gonna make much progress if your mind is working in panic mode.

To help with that I like to let students know from upfront...

You are not going to get everything the first time you try. Maybe not the second or 20th time either. And guess what... Some stuff is going to confuse you. But give it time.

Take the problem from another angle, do some research into it. Screaming at the top of your lungs ain't gonna do much other than give you a sore throat.

I've found that a lot of stuff that had me busting a fuse a week ago, comes as clear as day when I just let it stew in my head and don't freak out over it.

Bass playing is cool and it's fun. Don't turn into Hitler over it.

Recognize that you are going to have to WAIT a bit to master something new. That's the way stuff goes. If you're trying to move through a wall and you're beating your hands against it and that's not working there is no use continuing beating your hands against it.

Go get a hammer.

The point is to try another angle. If you take a break to clear your head that doesn't mean that you gave up. And be thankful for barriers to entry by the way... (That is, things that make something hard to accomplish). If it wasn't for those nagging little barriers nothing would be special. Imagine everyone in the world having a Bugatti Veyron... Tsk Tsk Tsk.

(Oh yeah if you don't know what a Bugatti Veyron is do go a Google search and enjoy the results.)

...

Ok so we've spoken about the big barriers that strangle hold your bass playing and development.

We just looked at the seven (7) main characteristics of a world class practice session because we understand that the right type of practice is the secret magic elixir juice that 'they' have been keeping from you. Now let's take a closed look at five big things to practice.

These are things I like to use as jumper cables when I feel stuck.

“5 Powerful Jumper Cables For Boosting Your Playing...”

So you know the invisible barriers that are likely blocking your progress...

You know that “Progressive Practice Sessions” are the magic elixir to destroying these barriers and you know *how* progressive practice session are put together... Now I want to tell you what specifically to practice in your “Progressive Practice Sessions”...

These work like a charm and anytime you’re stuck you can’t go wrong spending some time concentrating on raising your ability in these areas.

Understanding & Application of Musical Theory

Here’s a thought...

What if, (just imagine for a second that) the electric bass is a real bonafide instrument and its player is a REAL bonafide musician like any other member of the band?

Nothing chaffs my butt more than being around players who try to imply ‘any bozo’ can play the bass.

Sure it’s true that ‘any bozo’ can make sound come out of a bass and the instrument can in fact have a relatively short ‘get started’ learning curve but if you’ve read this far down into this report you and I both know that you are probably one of the folks who want more of your playing than just being able to ‘whack’ out the notes to ‘Smoke on the Water’.

So if someone tries to convince you that the easier and more likely path to being appreciated as a respectable musician and bassist doesn’t involve taking the time to learn at least some theory the way any other musician has to, offer to take them out to lunch and order them a ‘clue’ when the server comes around.

If this is one of your weak areas then you’ve simply gotta take the time to work on making it part of your new comfort zone.

And truth is, taking the time to learn the theory is;

- 1) A lot easier than most people think,
- 2) Gives you far better odds at rapid improvement and
- 3) Give you far more artistic control over what you play no matter what is thrown at you.

And don't go thinking that 'theory' is rocket science. I'm not asking you to study music so that you can write a thesis and comment on the history of music. I just recommend you focus on understanding (*among other things that'll come later*);

- ◆ How chords are made up
- ◆ What scales dance well with what chords
- ◆ What degrees and chord tones sound best over what chords
- ◆ How to substitute scales for other more common ones
- ◆ How to modes are constructed and how to apply them in your playing
- ◆ Scale harmonization and common chord chunks and progressions
- ◆ How to read and write sheet music

The fact is that the bassists you see and hear creating outstanding music (*the ones who flip you out on YouTube™*) do so because they understand how music is made! And that's all that theory is...

Don't bug out over it... Don't fear it. Don't clam up around it.

All that theory is, is an understanding of how music is created... What goes into making a tune... What commonly shows up when you put songs together.

So if you're getting tired of playing the same old, same old, chances are one of the very first things you want to look at starting TODAY is your understanding and application of theory.

Our Bass Guitar Secrets Home Study course does a pretty good job at explaining this stuff and more from a bass player's point of view. You can get more info and see it's a right fit for you by visiting this website; <http://www.BassGuitarSecrets.com>

If you're not sure that you want to check that out you still want to get your hands on a copy of a book called "The Jazz Theory Book" by Mark Levine. It's a fantastic resource for any musician. (Yup the book is a great resource for theory even if you're NOT playing 'jazz').

Technique, Dexterity & Stamina

I often use the analogy that, like it or not, a serious speech impediment can totally ruin even the best written speech.

To me that's what technique is all about. A lot of folks have varying opinions on how much work should be done on your technique.

Some argue that there's no use in being able to play fast, and slap all over the place if what you're playing is boring. I couldn't agree more.

Some argue that there's no use in having all the best ideas in the world if you can't play them cleanly and fluently, and that the 'best ideas' usually involve some level of technical ability. These folks are therefore arguing that you can't use 'musicality' as a shield to cop out of practicing your technique (chops) ... I couldn't agree more.

Smile. Sound kinda both-sided?

Well here's what I think. I think that your level of technical ability always needs to just exceed your playing context and level of harmonic understanding. (*Oh yeah — and who ever said that 'technique' means playing fast and slapping like crazy?* To me technique is simply the ability to get your fingers to play what your mind wants it to.)

I just said that if you have a speech impediment you're hosed when it comes to speaking even if your 'written' speech is killer.

Likewise if you can't play what you mind is asking cleanly and clearly, chances are you're not going to get the 'oomph' you want outta your playing. Now you might again argue that a 65 year old grandpa playing recreationally in a country band probably don't need to be able to run off a Cello Study by Kreuter on the bass...

That's where playing context comes in!

So I like to advise that students work on technique so that their ability just exceeds what they would likely be called on to play. Now that's subjective and that's up to you.

The second half of the measurement for 'technical ability' is based on your level of harmonic understanding... Yup, your theory!

So if you saw the need to study theory because your playing was boring the life outta a corpse, then you automatically also need to spend more time on developing your chops as well.

So exercises that tax your ability to 'string cross', play 16th notes cleanly and evenly, control open string resonance, palm mute, play vibratos, test your left hand 1 finger per fret playing, require you to play hammer-ons and pull offs, ghost notes etc. etc. etc. instantly become a part

of the deal when you want to raise the overall interest of your playing, because improved musicality, (*while it may not always mean playing faster*), will continually call on your hands to do things that help you articulate ideas.

It's kinda like learning to run on your hands... Sure somewhere someone might be darn good at being able to pull that stuff off, but guess what... No matter how good they think they can get at that, there's a very REAL ceiling that says, "*If that's how you run there are things you are never going to be able to do – end of story*".

Same thing with weak technique... It puts a very real ceiling on just what you can possibly do. If you're playing with your thumb only there is only so much speed you are likely to develop.

This is one of the reasons why you need to pay so much attention to your weak areas and plot practice time around them. You need to know what you are likely called on to play based on your playing context, the current level of your musical understanding and ask yourself, "*With what I know and what I have to play where are my chops letting me down?*"

That's a big question you need to be asking frequently.

Musicality/Musical Vocabulary

Now I'm no killjoy. I know it's no fun to work on some stuffy theory and boring dexterity exercises all day if you never get to jam, so I admit it's just as important to PLAY as it is to STUDY.

I am a firm believer that musicality is BEST helped by a player listening and replicating, BUT with a firm understanding of what you are replicating.

I know several bassists who are nothing more than parrots.

They can't play the instrument, but give them enough time they can play what someone else did. 9 times outta ten those guys just randomly plug in stuff where it sounds ok.

Hey if that's your bag, no worries.

The sad thing with that is that people who are anything more than 'wide eyed star gazers' are gonna realize that you're stuck playing just a few patterns and licks you ripped off some guy over and over, and what more is that you're gonna quickly get BORED.

Can you become a darn good bassist like this? Absolutely. There are tons of folks out there that can 'pony show' a crowd, 100% based on copying someone else, and a bunch of canned licks but sadly;

- ♦ They have no voice of their own and...
- ♦ In the long run they expended just as much effort (if not more) than the guy who took the extra 3 minutes to UNDERSTAND just what he was 'juicing' from another player.

So that's why (to continue sounding like the broken record that I am) it's important that we spoke of understanding harmony and theory first. But the flip side is that while you can learn to speak a language by reading books, getting all the grammatical rules and stuff, you can only CONVERSE if you actively talk with others.

So I encourage players to work this into their schedule...

Go ahead. Learn some licks, do transcriptions, listen to and copy as many respected bass players as you like ... And when you pick up stuff, play it back with your band/DVD player/CD player/recorded loops.

But always, always, when you learn a lick, examine it and ask questions like;

- ♦ What degrees of what scale am I using here?
- ♦ What beat does this lick start on?
- ♦ What chord is it being played over?
- ♦ How can I use this over another chord in another progression?
- ♦ How can I change this lick to it can be played in a shorter/longer space?
- ♦ Can I change the way the lick speaks by changing the inflections? (*Slides, bends etc.*)

Fretboard Fluency

This is a biggie. It's easily recognized and accepted as one of the true 800 lb gorillas everyone who touches a bass eventually wants to conquer.

It's a very valuable skill but developing fretboard fluency isn't done the way most people tend to think.

You see, for some strange reason there's this overly popular view that suggests if you learn/memorize all the notes on the fretboard you're good to go like FloJo...

Everything else fretboard related will just magically fall into place and you'll be able to play things on the bass that were previously thought impossible on a planet with gravity.

Let me clearly set the record straight for you...

That's such a pile of baloney it ain't even remotely funny and if that's your approach to 'getting it' you're gonna work way to hard chasing a mirage that will continue to elude you for as long as you keep falling for it.

Knowing all the notes on the fretboard don't make you any more of a good musician than knowing the names of all the tools in a shed makes you a good carpenter. (*Man ain't that a stinker?*)

When I talk about fretboard fluency I mean **the ability to apply harmonic concepts to the fretboard with complete ease.**

Let me be plainer.

You don't just want to know the names of notes you need to be able to;

- ◆ Spot several options for any degree of a chord, anywhere on the fretboard
- ◆ Play scales and arpeggios across the entire board
- ◆ See common degrees between chords while moving through them
- ◆ Use certain degrees as voice leads when you solo
- ◆ Play modes in more than one pattern
- ◆ Play scales and lines horizontally or vertically with equal ease
- ◆ Ascend / Descend across the entire length of your fingerboard playing any scale/ mode you need
- ◆ Connect the lower register with the higher register seamlessly
- ◆ See 'chordal clusters' and root movements on the fretboard as clearly as a neon sign at night
- ◆ Etc.

...These are the things that give fretboard fluency and it's a very detailed study in and of itself.

It's the only way you're going to break the mould that 'pure pattern play' brings and it's one of the key elements that let folks see that you ain't just fumbling around.

The freedom that a player accesses when he learns his fretboard the right way is flat out astounding and it is my firm belief that it is one of the things that will continue to separate the men from the boys so to speak.

Incidentally because this is such a crucial topic for the practicing bassist... One that really does instantly and noticeably bump your ability, there is one resource I recommend whole-heartedly called 'The Fretboard Formula'...

Trust me, if what you want is a THROUGH understanding of how the fretboard works and tons of real live discoveries I made about how the notes interact in a way that flat out works for NORMAL folks, then this is something you want to check out;
<http://www.FretBoardFormula.com>

In it I'll show you step by step how to put the Fretboard Formula to work for you to open quickly have you take advantage of the bass fretboard's unique design once and for all. In fact chances are if you use just 10% of what you learn from it you'll start separating yourself from the 'general bass crowd'...

I'd love to go on and on about it being the best thing since slice bread because it is (smile) but it's one of our products and I don't want to sound biased... When you see what's covered here I won't have to convince you.

The Fundamentals

And strangely enough I left this for last...

Now I like any one else hate to hear people insinuate that all bassists are good for is a root note here and a root note there... Play that, stay in the background and let the real musicians go at it.

But I also recognize that the FUNCTION, space and CONTEXT for the instrument must be understood.

The bass provides the link that effectively glues the harmony, melody and rhythm together. It's a key focal point for the listener acting kinda like the table of contents to the overall tune. At its core the bass is a rhythmic instrument that's pitched.

As such it does have some functional roles that must be played before you go getting all buck wild crazy playing everything you know in every song you play... Especially if you ever hope to be hired/accepted as a band's bassist and not the 'Provider of Liquid Sustenance' (*Translated: Water Boy*) or 'Guardian of the Instruments of Worth' (*Translated: Roadie*).

So there are things I see as 'Fundamentals' that I will ALWAYS work on.

- ◆ Being able to play in time unwaveringly. With or without a metronome even at tempos below 60 bpm.
- ◆ Being to count in time for any subdivision
- ◆ If I need to play 1/8th notes I must be able to play that without hitch...
- ◆ I should be able to play any combination of 1/16th notes I need.
- ◆ I should be able to shuffle a beat, to make it swing, play triplets...
- ◆ To lock with a drummer and groove either with the kick or 'against' it
- ◆ To represent a chord correctly as I need...
- ◆ Executing rudiments like octave play, slides, vibratos etc.
- ◆ To properly accent a 'phrase' in a song with the rest of the band...
- ◆ Understand mood and choose note length, note energy and placement accordingly
- ◆ Understand the characteristics of common genres. What make 'Rock' rock and not 'Funk'

- ◆ Adjust and shape my tone to suit the music I'm playing
- ◆ Play dead on, on-top or behind the beat
- ◆ Listen to songs and develop catchy bass hooks/motifs for the bass line
- ◆ Know when to plain ole' shut up
- ◆ Etc.

In short, there are core functions of the bass that must always be represented before there are embellished, and those core functions include good time-keeping, good taste and a good solid ability to play an unshakeable groove.

If you continue to work on these five areas you are going to continue to be golden.

Finally let's look at a few sample practice schedules, bearing in mind all the stuff we've already said today...

“The Practice Schedules...”

Ok I mentioned that I'll be giving you guys a couple possible practice schedules and I wanna keep my word. Here goes...

Remember whenever you feel stuck we're gonna try to do a blitz were we hit at least 10 – 14 days non-stop of planned practice – preferably 30 days **without missing a single day**. This is our 'getting unstuck attack'.

Now please understand it is impossible to give a one size fits all schedule here for the possible hundreds of thousands of folks who will read this ebook. I am trying to provide a mere guideline that you take and amend as you see fit.

If you have only 35 minutes a day you can afford here's how I'd divide that time.

Because 35 minutes really is a minimal amount of time it's difficult to do too many things in any one practice session if you want to see fruit. So we'll partition our schedule in terms of days rather than putting too much into each 35 minute schedule.

The first thing I'd do when starting a 30 blitz is find my most glaring weakness.

This is honestly something that's going to take internal introspection from you.

Start by looking at the five big areas we mentioned above. My guess is that you can't go wrong by doing some harmony studies at any point of your education so that's a good place to start looking.

On top of that because it's common to find bass players with weaker harmonic understanding I'd like to see anyone trying to move forward get at least some harmony under their belt. So getting a book on harmony (*doesn't matter what instrument it is for*) will help you a lot in the long run.

You must understand how chords are created and it's important to learn to recognize as many common chord progressions as you can. By that I mean chord groupings like 2 – 5 – 1's and 1 – 5 – 4 – 6's and so on.

If you don't know what these mean you really need to work on your harmony studies. You'd want to take a close look at things like;

- ◆ The harmonization of the Major Scale.
- ◆ Modes and what scale/mode is used over what most common chords
- ◆ How arpeggios are played on the bass.
- ◆ Some simple chord/scale substitutions

Again these are not things that you're going to cover in a 30 minute period on one day. I'd tackle not more than one area a day for the first 14 day blitz. So you may start by studying mostly harmonic theory for about the first 5 days.

The truth is it's not that hard to understand but you do want to learn from a guide that simplifies the concepts because once you get to application your understanding of the rules are all the more important.

And in case you're doubting, 35 minutes a day is a lot of time to study harmony. Really folks it's not that far out there if you start with the basics and just take it slow and steady.

In fact if you spend 20 a day for the first 5 day on harmony only, with a 'readable', understandable guide you'll be surprised at how much music you understand.

For example... It is my firm belief that if taught right, even a **green beginner** can be taught to understand modes in less than 15 minutes... And I'm talking GREEN beginner.

They will not master it, but the core understanding of what modes are can be taught quite easily.

So if I do 15 – 20 minutes of harmonic study today, I'd spend the next 15 – 20 minutes of the day applying that harmony in a practical way.

So if I studied modes for 15 minutes, I'd then have some recorded chord progressions played back and practice playing the correct modes over them over and over, just to get the sound of what the mode matched against the chord sounds like in my ear.

A cool and easy way to get 'backing chords' to play along with is by using a program such as Band in a Box (do a search on Google for it) or a piece of hardware like the Yamaha QY-100 sequencer. (I use them both. The Yamaha sequencer is a bit pricey but you might get a decent deal on one at places like eBay.Com or Craigslist.Com)

If I studied a scale substitution (a bit advanced for the beginner so this is for the intermediate player reading this) I'd then use recorded material again that will allow me to practice playing the substituted scale over the chord.

For example one common substitution I practice is the use of the Lydian Melodic over Dominant 7th chords one tritone up from the Dominant chord's ROOT note. (Eg. Using the Db Lydian Melodic over a G7 chord)...

If that's gibberish you need a good book on harmony.

And even if you think you're a 'slower learner' when it comes to this theory stuff and you end up spending the entire 14 days of your 'bass blitz' on it, I still honestly don't see it as a waste of time.

REMEMBER YOU ARE NOT TRYING TO MASTER THE BASS IN 30 DAYS.

You are simply trying to do stuff that will stimulate growth, and once you're working on one of the big 5 above and challenging your comfort area you're stimulating growth.

If you're new to the instrument the time you spend getting some key harmonic concepts under your belt is going to pay off in spades.

So if you spend the first 30 days studying harmony and BASIC application you're way ahead of the general crowd. **Don't feel lousy about that. That's highly commendable.**

Learn your scales, learn your modes, learn your arpeggios, learn what chords are generally found together in clusters. All of this stuff is seen as 'boring theory' and unfortunately most student players choose to skip over them and try to 'learn a song'.

Fight that urge like a cornered bobcat!

Consider that in most formal lines of study you can spend entire semesters doing just this. So really, what's 30 days to complain about?

Now you're probably wondering about some good resources to cover these topics. I'm not going to make this difficult.

I'll recommend two resources. And I do so because they are good.

If you're like me you'd get them both. If not it's totally up to you to get one or neither. I'm just telling you what I think you should do.

My [Bass Guitar Secrets](http://www.BassGuitarSecrets.Com) course (<http://www.BassGuitarSecrets.Com>) covers these things very comprehensively.

The approach we take to study bass gives the beginner and intermediate player a very thorough course of study that ensures he gets some key harmonic understanding under his belt in a very understandable way. It's one of the things I think we do pretty well (teach for clarity) and our course gets big praise for it from our users.

What more is that the course goes way beyond the stuff I mentioned here and it's specifically written for bass players. So that's a plus.

I'm not trying to pressure anyone into getting my course. I'm recommending it based on the fact that I and thousands upon thousands of players know its value. It's not a collection of lesson plans, or sample bass lines at all. 'Nuff said.

The other resource I'd get is "The Jazz Theory Book" by Mark Levine. And **this book flat out rocks.**

Again I'd get both. That's less than the cost of two bass lessons in most states and you're covered with harmony like you took a 4 year college degree in music. *(Use the magic Google.com hound dog to 'sniff' out a copy — You can buy it online.)*

Get the books. Do a 14 – 30 day blitz and work on nothing else but harmonic concepts and basic application of it for 35 minutes a day. Don't make this more difficult than it has to be folks.

If you learn a mode, practice playing it over the chord.

If you learn how a chord is constructed practice playing the arpeggio of that chord in different areas of your bass. You're simply looking to get a harmonic concept and practice applying it instantly (as simple as it may be).

Now that was just to get harmony outta the way.

If you're either already comfortable with harmonic understanding as I outlined above, or if you took my advice and studied it for 30 days straight no days missed chances are you're next 30 day blitz can take on a whole different form.

It can be a lot more practical.

But please don't jump passed this point unless you're comfortable with the first golden key of the big 5.

If you're good with that here are a few schedules you can use as further 'jump starts'.

With a 35 minute session I'd;

♦ Warm up for	3 - 5
♦ Practice 3 different scales or modes and patterns	10
♦ Time keeping	10
♦ Application	10

Let me break that down a bit.

The Warm Up: Here I'd go through either of the following exercise with a metronome for just about 5 minutes at **about 65 bpm.** *(Remember you're not trying to build super technique here, you are simply doing a light exercise to WARM UP. Keep it slow.)*

Diagram illustrating a warm-up exercise on a 4-string bass. The strings are labeled G, D, A, and E. The exercise consists of a sequence of notes across the strings, with fret numbers (3, 4, 5, 6) and fingerings (i, m, r, p) indicated below the strings. The sequence is: G (3rd fret, index), D (4th fret, middle), A (5th fret, ring), E (6th fret, pinkie), then the same sequence repeated on the next string, and so on.

This warm up exercise is simply enough... But to explain for the beginners...

Each line represents a string on your bass as labeled E, A, D and G. To the bottom of the diagram the letter I, M, R and P stand for;

Index, Middle, Ring and Pinkie fingers respectively. These are the fingers on your left hand you use to play the notes. And finally the numbers on each string tell you what fret to play...

So as an example when you see a '3' on the top line directly over a letter 'I' it means that you use your index finger to play the G string at the 3rd fret.

When you hit the end just start over and loop this for a few minutes. Remember, use a metronome and do this slowly (65 bpm) and hit each note cleanly on each quarter note.

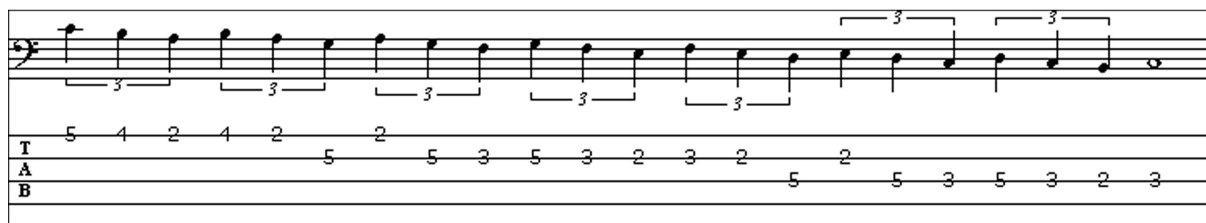
Scale practice: For the scales I'd pick one that I'm comfortable with and two scales that that still out of my comfort zone and work with those.

I always practice scales in sequence or cycles of 3 and 4 (*among others sequences.*)

(*For example playing a scale in cycles of 3 means I'd play 1st note, 2nd note, 3rd note, 2nd note, 3rd note, 4th note, 3rd note, 4th note, 5th note and so on.*)

Here's an example of what the major scale (Ionian mode) would look like in cycles of 3's forward and then backward.

Diagram illustrating a scale exercise on a 4-string bass. The strings are labeled G, D, A, and E. The exercise consists of a sequence of notes across the strings, with fret numbers and fingerings (i, m, r, p) indicated below the strings. The sequence is: G (3rd fret, index), D (4th fret, middle), A (5th fret, ring), E (6th fret, pinkie), then the same sequence repeated on the next string, and so on.



And secondly I always practice playing all the modes of the scale in succession. So if I'm practicing my Major Scale I'd play;

- ◆ C Ionian
- ◆ D Dorian
- ◆ E Phrygian
- ◆ F Lydian
- ◆ Etc.

Some important points again. The first exercise (the one where we play the scale cycles) I'd do that for each mode of the scale. Again remember to use your metronome.

Here is where you are continually looking to push yourself. You want to keep pushing the bpm's faster as long as you can do so without error. And a final tip is to work these exercises in multiple keys... So don't always work starting on C.

The reason is, although on bass the patterns will remain the same, you need to get out of the habit of subconsciously associating the markers on your bass's fingerboard with any one pattern.

Everything I practice in terms of scales I'd play both forward and in reverse, and I always try to make sure that I learnt MORE than one pattern for fingering each mode of the scale.

If you're not quite hip to modes etc again pick up either [Bass Guitar Secrets](#) or The Jazz Theory Book.

Time Keeping:

For my time keeping workout I'd set my metronome to a comfortable pace (like 75bpm) and practice hitting $\frac{1}{4}$ notes, $\frac{1}{8}$ th notes, $\frac{1}{16}$ th notes and triplets, first on any note... then going through a major scale hitting each note once.

The Korg BeatLab is an excellent metronome for this type of thing because it does subdivisions of each beat into all sorts of 'weird' pieces... (You can get each note sub-divided into 9 if you like! Yikes...)

Then to up the challenge, I'd slow the metronome down!

Yup if I start at 70 bpm I'd slow it down to an eventual 40 bpm. Reason being it's A LOT harder to keep time when the tempo is that slow.

Most folks find that they end up inadvertently speeding up the time and playing unevenly or before the beat. Basically we end up rushing the tempo. So you want to focus on getting your time-keeping skill so developed that you can play evenly even at very slow tempos.

Trust me this will take work.

I'd then focus on playing any random combination of 1/16th notes in a measure. For example we know that you can count in 1/16th notes by going 1, e, and, ah, 2, e, and, ah, 3, e, and ah... Etc.

I would try to play only on the 'e' of each beat... Then on the "and", "ah" of each beat... Then only on the "ah" then on the "e" and "ah". Hopefully this makes sense to you. If you don't understand give it some time and read it again.

You are simply trying to hit specific rhythmic points when your metronome is playing

You get the idea. If you don't this is above your head and you need to check out some basics. If you've been playing awhile you should know what I mean and this is a fabulous exercise.

Application:

And when it comes to application you want to practice locking with a drummer using the fact that you understand harmony, chord structure and rhythm.

That's beyond the scope of this report but if you're a frequent visitor of my blog chances are you'll see several great examples of how I break down a song and the thinking process I use to analyze and build a bass line.

Again this report is not meant to be a college bass education. It's meant to give you guidance to get unstuck or get going. It's meant to spark thought and give clarity of direction.

So I expect that there are things many people will not know. (Like subdivisions of the beat and modes etc) but I can't teach that stuff here.

So that's a bare bones practice session. 35 minutes is not a lot of time. But if you're consistent you're gonna blow your own mind. If you can however I'd like to see you stick in an additional 10 minutes every other day where you work on a miscellaneous task.

This miscellaneous task is you focusing on any previously identified weakness.

So if it's speed, you work on scales and increasing your 'perfect tempo'... *(Perfect tempo is a phrase I use to identify what speed in bmps I can play something at without error. This is an important measurement you want to keep note of to track your progress!)*

If it's dexterity because your hands get tired quick you want to work on getting your hand exercises down and building some stamina. The same exercises I showed you for warming up can be used, but I have a lot more strength and dexterity training exercises in my bag for our Bass Guitar Secrets customers.

If you're using the warm up exercise for building dexterity though it's a good idea to continually speed it up a bit.

The best resource I can recommend though, if you want to work exclusively on building your technique and chops is [The Bass Chopz Accelerator Program](http://www.basschopz.com). (<http://www.basschopz.com>)

If it's that your playing is dry, you want to focus on developing feel, and the use of articulations to make your playing speak rather than recite then a simple but very useful thing to do is...

LISTEN TO MORE MUSIC!

But when you do so don't just listen...

I don't know if this sounds weird to you but listening to good bass lines (or sax, flute whatever) with your eyes closed, holding your bass and imagining (and 'fingering') that the solo you are listening to is being played by you is excellent.

Yeah I sound nuts, but then almost all the top musicians I know when they listen to a tune they really like, (even when they don't have their instrument) you'd see their fretting hand subconsciously 'play' the line on their 'air bass'...

I know top drummers who would be riding in the car listening to a song on the radio and beating on the steering wheel, or their laps, or on an imaginary drum kit around them.

What I believe that does, (and I may be wrong) is to take you out of the role of the passive listener and 'trick' your mind into the mode where you are now paying for more attention to detail because 'you are having to play'...

Now you may not be able to play exactly what you're hearing but if when you listen you do so from the point of view that you are the one creating the music, the mind somehow builds a greater propensity to be musical in the way the recording is musical.

I'm done this and surprised myself by almost magically internalizing the bass line... At times I'd pick up my bass after this 'active listening' exercise and would just know where every slide, every bend, every ghost note is played...

Silly? Maybe but it works for me and I ain't questioning it.

On top of that of course is actually getting a book of transcriptions of great bass lines and solos and working through it. This is an outstanding way to see how scales and arpeggios are used in the creation of REAL music.

Most music stores carry transcription books like a collection of solos by Jaco or Gary Willis etc. These are powerful resources because it trains your mind to see scales not as one big chunk that has to be played mechanically but rather as a pool of available notes to be used with taste.

So that's an additional ten **focused** minutes every 5 days (at least) to work on ONE identified weakness.

Remember here you try to find the things you are uncomfortable with and DO it.

If you got 65 – 75 minutes a day even better.

Now the 35 minute schedule is great, so it's better in my mind that, if you know you can't commit CONSISTENTLY to a more time consuming schedule, you stick to the 35 minute schedule.

If however you're able to spend more time and you know you won't flake out, then 65 – 75 minutes is going to show you a lot more results.

This is the path I'd like to see more of the players with a strong desire to 'step up their game' take.

At 35 minutes you're still thinking *"...bass is just a recreational relaxer... I don't expect to be playing with any band or anything. I'm cool tinkering."*

If your playing is ANYTHING more than tinkering, bite the bullet and find some time.

1 hour a day for just 14 – 30 days. Think like top achievers do.

"I'm going to dedicate January to bumping my playing up, and January is going to go by so quickly whether or not I stick to my plan so I might as well make use of the time. When February comes around I am going to love myself for it."

♦ Warm up for	5 mins
♦ Scales modes and patterns	10 mins
♦ Time and feel development	15 min
♦ Analysis of a bassline	20 mins
♦ Application	15 min

Then every other day work an additional 15 minutes in a miscellaneous weakness.

Analysis of a bass line:

Here's how that works.

Every day you choose a bass line that really speaks to you. And unlike the casual, misguided 'jammer' you aren't just 'playing along' with the CD player. What you are doing is very carefully breaking down the bass line piece by piece every day and looking for clues and examples of how harmony is applied.

Let me warn you, this will at first be a pain depending on the difficulty of the song. You'll occasionally find that you have to re-listen to a single passage many times if it's an advanced song.

You'll be tempted to just move on and ignore parts... Try not to.

You want to listen and try to 'transcribe' the bass line. But in doing so try to ask yourself questions like;

- ◆ What are the chord progressions used here?
- ◆ What degrees of what scale did he just play?
- ◆ What makes this note sound suitable here?
- ◆ How did he join the last chord with the next chord? What degree did he/she use?
- ◆ How are the notes working with the drum? What parts of the drum is the bassist playing with/against?
- ◆ How much space is the bassist occupying in the band?
- ◆ Etc.

I'm not talking about putting on the CD and listening while you wash the car. You do that anyway. I am talking about making time in your practice session to actually, listen to a bass line you like and tearing it apart for a focused 20 minutes.

Looking at things like the key of the song, what degrees the bassist played, where he played them in terms of the drum pattern, was it on the kick or off... What's the feel of the song is it on top the beat, behind the beat, dead center?

What scales, arpeggios, modes did he use for that run? What degrees were played in the run?

You need to spend time asking hard questions like an investigative reporter.

I find that all too often players listen but do so from a perspective that *"wow this cat is the baddest thing on earth. Let me just sit hear and adore him."*

Know what? That's cool and all but do so on your casual time.

When you're practicing using the CD PLAYER, YOU ARE NOT randomly jamming. You are analyzing a song with an eagle eye to see what concepts you can get out of it to apply in different situations.

That's a vast difference and produces vastly different results!

A Quick Recap, And Your Gold Ticket!

Ok I'm getting ready to close of this report now I just wanted to make sure you got the most important points.

- ◆ We spoke about why some people got stuck quite candidly. I know for a fact many bassists reading this report will connect with that. I can see you nodding your heads and laughing to yourself when you read that section.
- ◆ We proved that you can be a good if not better than 'the guy next door' because it's only a small percentage of 'the bass genius' population that is gifted beyond all fairness. MOST others simply practice better than others.
- ◆ We spoke of the factors that need to be present in a fruitful rehearsal session and the core issues that would likely be helpful for a wide range of practicing bass players to work on to get unstuck. These are the bigger picture things you focus on... The Strategy for progressive growth. And that what this ebook was... Not so much tactics, but strategy!
- ◆ We noticed and admitted to ourselves that we won't master the instrument in 3 days. There's a lot of stuff that goes into being a real artist on the instrument and it can take decades. Enjoy the process. BUT what is comforting is that I be you'd be amazed at the feeling of progress you get if you follow my outlined system for a 14 – 30 blitz and work on the areas I highlighted.
- ◆ We sucker punched the attitude that suggests bass is for simpletons. Fact is we ROCK hard!
- ◆ We looked at a couple schedules and I gave you a lot of detail into how I'd apportion each. You can modify them a bit but they will help you immensely as they are.

I can't tell you how many people ask for things like this. A look at what a well planned practice schedule looks like because MANY people have no idea what to practice and in what order.

And thing is, most of our problems truly do lie in the fact that we are not following properly structured plans of study.

What we missed for so long were strategic plans that allow us to FOCUS on a task and attack it in a consistent way. This report will help with that.

I myself don't think I see many bassists talking about this kinda stuff unless you're paying them.

I really hope you appreciate it.

In short what I've attempted to do in this strategic guide (or 'manifesto' if you will) is to cause a shift in the way you approach study of the instrument and prompt you to develop the habits needed if you're to become a better player.

It's not in getting another fancy lick folks. That's counter productive in the long run. That's a small part of a far bigger vision.

My true hope is that I was able to spark some thought and excitement for practicing in you.

I'll say it again — **There's still time, starting today, to power up you playing by leaps and bounds.**

...You can still be a **very well respected and admired musician and you can have a heck of a lot of fun playing the instrument** in a way that is functional to a band and enjoyably to you at the same time.

If you follow the advice in this ebook you will easily be on your way to becoming the guy everyone asks bass questions... The one who is thought to be that special player.

Keep Reading... I'm Not Done Yet!

Like I said before this book is all about strategic thinking. But I also recognize the value of tactics... (Meaning specific exercises and licks and stuff...)

And because of that I want to give you a lot more great free information into the real ins and outs of improving your bass playing – I've got a lot more specific play by play training I can give you to help you see far better results in a lot less time.

If you're reading this and you're not part of our little (*well not so little anymore*) underground community at [Bass Guitar Tips](http://www.BassGuitarTips.Com) (<http://www.BassGuitarTips.Com>) you need to check out some more of the free content we got for our folks.

The BGT blog is a great place to get an inside pass;

<http://www.BassGuitarTips.Com/newblog>

The stuff we cover on the blog has been very well accepted by our online community and they are reporting MASSIVE results.

I'm not trying to pressure anybody, but chances are if you want to pick up the pace or you're new to bass playing we've got some awesome content for ya and most of it is delivered in video. (Oh did I mention it's free?)

So here's what to do...

Go to <http://www.BassGuitarTips.Com/newblog> right now and bookmark that page because you'll want to visit often.

Get Far Better Results In A lot Less Time.

Now let's get to the completely self serving and diabolic evil catch some of you 'knew' had to be coming.

There had to be a catch right?

I slaved over this report, writing it, re-writing and trying to make it clear and understandable all day for several months... (Remember, my PC has ADD) and I' totally cool with that.

What started off as a short report turned into a full blown ebook because as I was pouring my ideas out on paper I kept thinking of things that I didn't want to hold back.

My hope is that you see that. I didn't slave over this because I had nothing else to do. It all about trying to be OPEN with info I truly believe will HELP. That's all.

And if you take this, read it and never buy a single product we have that's totally fine by us. However there is something important you need to know if you're one of the more motivated folks among us.

In the next few weeks (*as of the time I'm writing this*) I'm getting set to crack open the doors to allow a few people into the most detailed, hand-holding, results producing training I have ever done with a group of students.

I am so excited about it that I lay awake a nights thinking about it. Thinking about the lucky folks who will be part of the program and the results I just know they will see in their playing.

How am I so confident?

You see if I'm frank with you I'd say that as great as the free training we provide is, (all the video blog posts and ebooks like this that I give away) it's all just the appetizer for something I

have been working on for the better part of the last 18 months that is going to revolutionize and set the new bar for fretboard fluency training.

And the few folks who end up working with me on this training are going to quite simply skip YEARS of trial and error and frustration in trying to master the fretboard while others around them remain stuck.

They are going to see outstanding results and they will be the ones who 'get' the fretboard as easily as the get how to tie their shoes. I am sure it will be one of the defining moments of many people's bass playing.

Trust me on this one... You want to keep your eyes peeled for any info I send out about this new class. It's called [The Fretboard Formula](http://www.FretBoardFormla.Com) (<http://www.FretBoardFormla.Com>) and it's coming to a website near you soon.

Well that's it. Really hope you enjoyed this book and I really do wish you all the best with your bass playing.

Stay classy San Diego...

- Alex

P.S. I recognize if this book seems a bit overwhelming in size, but that only because I truly, deeply wanted to share as many potent ideas as I could to help you understand what I know for a fact is the correct path to playing more noticeably outstanding bass, having far more fun and seeing that improvement in far less time.

Despite the size I do recommend printing and reading this ebook a few times over the next couple months to make sure you grasp the importance of everything in it. I kid you not... There are so many 'secrets' to thinking and becoming a better player in here that you are bound to discover new ones on the 2 and 3 read.

P.P.S. If you have a friend you want to give it to that's perfectly fine as well.

...Like most people, I am skeptical of courses that claim to deliver a lot and cost only a little. I decided to take a chance on this course and I am glad I did.

...I am only on page 60 of manual one and have learned more than from all the other courses and dvd's I have—Combined.

You will not be disappointed with this investment. I would have easily paid 3 times the money for this. Get it!!

~ **Tom LEESEBERG (Nebraska)**

I am an intermediate player who hit a wall creatively a year ago and haven't played since.

I picked up my bass a few days ago with hopes the wall had disappeared. In search of the perfect instruction guide to alleviate my problem I ran across your site.

In a matter of an hour I was up and running again.

Nobody, teachers or players ever explained the approach to bass playing as articulate as you and your program. Thanks for saving my creative a*s...

Happy Holidays

~ Stefan Bright

...In one word— "Fantastic"...

As an intermediate bass player of several years I felt I would only find clarification of knowledge previously learnt, I however found out the difference between knowing something and truly understanding why it works.

I have more confidence in my now stronger technique. Alex has a unique way of visualizing and teaching that demystifies music theory.

I look forward to any future publications from you. Many thanks

~ Alex Wotherspoon (London)

Alex, you really know your sh*t!! -- You may have transformed this lead guitar player into a bass man. :-)

~ Jojo Stockton

"...I feel like I've learned more in the last couple days than I have in the past 10 years. Thank you!"

~ Jay Ziebart

Dude, I was so skeptical of your course when I saw it online, but now I'm a believer. **I love the course...**

You are truly a gifted bass player and teacher. Keep up the great work.

You are also honest and fair. God will bless you my brother. I hope to meet you some day.

~ Douglas W.

Alex, you don't know how helpful this course is to me... Thanks for all you do!

~ Ray

Thank you for putting so much of your time into these lesson— You're a wonderful bass player!

~ Jack

Alex, I have had your **Bass Guitar Secrets** for a while now and it has rapidly changed the way I think and approach the bass.

...My drummer has many years of experience and loves the drastic change in my playing!

Thanks!!

~ Chad

...I can't tell you how pleased I am... I've played bass for about 5 months now and your guide is really the best one I've had...

~ Matthew Nicholls

Hi Alex,

I'm 62 and I've been trying to teach myself music for almost 40 years and have never progressed beyond the "Book 2" level in music courses. I always believed that my brain wasn't wired to grasp music just as some people don't seem to be able to grasp math.

Anyway, your Bass Guitar Secrets course has changed my view on this and finally all the things I've studied over the years are finally starting to come together and make sense.

I'm even revisiting some of my old music instruction books and now they are making sense to me. Your very unique way of explaining things has opened up a door.

As a former school teacher, I probably have even more appreciation for your method in that I know that a good teacher is one that can look at the subject through his student's eyes and that's what you do.

Thanks for getting me excited about my music again!

~ Ed Picard

Alex, You are God's answer to my prayer. I wanted to improve my playing but there wasn't any thing in the music store that seemed like it would do the job.

I am so pleased I bought your CGX bass secrets — It does exactly what it says on the tin.

My playing has improved dramatically!!

I am so proud of you and the works your doing. Every 'would-be' bassist must hear about you! Give praise to whom praise is due. More power!!! and keep the good stuff coming!

~ Conrado E.

The information you've provided is very complete and easy to understand - high five man! My fingertips are burning - and I love it!

~ Gary Tomanich

Hi Alex, I just wanted to say I am very impressed with your presentation and the way you have created this business.

I purchased your product [Bass Guitar Secrets] and I'm even more impressed with how you put it together with the bass player in mind... most of all I am convinced you are business person with integrity... a rarity these days... You actually delivered what you said you would!

I can tell you put in a lot of hard work on this... and I appreciate it... I salute you as a man of your word, a man of integrity...

~ Skip McIntyre

This program rocks!!

Thanks,

~ Christopher C. Maples

Yo man you ain't never lied!

...this is the best bass tutoring I've ever experienced... I'm experimenting with all new techniques this system is teaching me and it works with eye popping, feet stomping results.

Heck I even listen to music differently. Can't wait to see how I sound in about 6 months! Thanks Alex for making me a believer.

~ Vlando "Uncle-V" Charleston

Hi Alex,

It's been just over a month since I first received the course from you. I didn't want to reply to you earlier 'cause I really wanted to digest all of what you sent...WOW! I am stoked man!!

I have just finished the first volume of the **Bass Guitar Secrets** course and I have to say, "Thank you Alex, I can't believe how much I have truly LEARNT in just 4 weeks!!"

So much of what I have learnt is complex in nature (*so complex that other teachers seem to have difficulty in conveying the concepts*) but you have written the course in an amazingly simplistic way.

I still can't believe I can play a major scale continuously from low B to highest B all over the neck of my Stingray without even thinking about it, and the way you explained chord composition and how to determine Major, Minor and Dim Chords is worth 100 times the price of the course.

So again Thank You Alex — I can't wait to be amazed again when I start volume 2.

Best of Bass

~ **Mike Onn (Brisbane Australia)**

RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

**"How to quickly and dramatically ignite your bass playing...
...starting today!"**



 [Click Here](http://www.BassGuitarSecrets.Com) 

BASS GUITAR SECRETS

"How To Play Professional, Full Sounding Bass Lines For Any Song You Hear -- Right Off 'The Top of Your Head'..."

<http://www.BassGuitarSecrets.Com>

THE FRETBOARD FORMULA

The Exact Six Things You Need to Work On Immediately...

...If You Ever Want to Be Able to Play Anything, Anywhere on the Fretboard With Style, Musicality, Confidence, and ZERO Hesitation...



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